

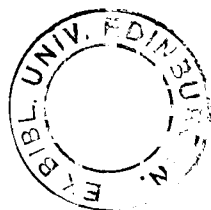
T H E S I S

THE CLAPHAM SECT

by

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Clapham Common, 1820.

(From the Clapham Antiquarian Society)

Where the Clapham Sect went to church

The church in the distance is the Clapham Parish Church, where John Venn preached. In memory of Venn there is now a tablet within the church; and in memory of the Clapham Sect there is on the outer wall another tablet with the inscription given in Appendix Four.

FOREWORD

The aim of this thesis may be stated very briefly. It is to give a picture as fair as possible, and as full as thesis limits will permit, of the men who earned the nickname: The Clapham Sect. It is to describe what manner of men they were, what manner of works they performed, and what manner of influence they exercised in their own and succeeding generations. It is to present a systematic account of what has hitherto been treated disparately in the histories of different movements and the biographies of different men. It is especially to describe the labours most characteristic of the Clapham Sect, most near to their heart, and most congenial to their temperament.

Consequently many questions interesting in themselves must be put aside. How far the Evangelicalism of the Clapham Sect was tinged with Calvinism, how far it was indebted to Wesleyan influence, and how far it came to be a 'posting house' from which the next generation moved on to Rome, are representative of many questions outside the field of enquiry. This thesis must simply accept the Clapham Sect as the leading lay representatives of the Evangelical religion of their day.

Consequently also - while no lines can ever be sharply drawn to limit who was, and who was not, within the Clapham fold - this thesis will deal with the men who joined most vigorously in the labours 'essentially Claphamic'; and will not have much concern, for instance, with John Thornton, though he was the greatest of the earlier figures, nor with Isaac Milner, though he was the most learned of them all.

Moreover, to much that remains within the scope of the thesis only general reference can be made. Within the space of two hundred pages it is obviously impossible to present a detailed account of the labours of a large group of distinguished men, all of whom were occupied with a wide variety of interests, and most of whom were gifted with an unusual capacity for hard work - men whose biographies may require from two to five volumes. It is equally impossible to recover the story of unrecorded labours in Societies now recalled only by passing references, and in undertakings an account of which early biographers have not chosen to preserve. To gather up the record - if indeed it can be gathered - of the social and philanthropic activities referred to in Chapter five would itself require a thesis more than ordinarily difficult.

This thesis therefore undertakes to do only one thing: It attempts to present a survey of the united labours undertaken by the little group of friends which gathered around Wilberforce, and either lived at Clapham for some time, or were closely associated with the Clapham group. It cannot

take all the labours, nor follow any of them exhaustively; but it makes an attempt to select the more significant, and through them to show the character and significance of the Clapham Sect. It makes an attempt to show how a company of men, themselves moved by religious impulse, gathered around Wilberforce after his conversion, and, as a company, headed movements that were then thought revolutionary, and that involved conflict with contemporary sentiment and vested interests. It suggests further how these men, while they were inspired almost wholly by motives of a religious origin, spoke in the vocabulary of religion, and engaged largely in enterprises of a specifically religious nature, yet by the principles they invoked, and the methods they developed, became a powerful indirect influence in wide ranges of social progress.

Singularly enough, despite the importance of the Clapham Sect, few biographies have been written of the individual members, and no history of the united group. It is hoped therefore that this study may be of some use in interpreting the Clapham Sect, their labours, their methods, and their permanent importance.

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Chapter One

A. HISTORICAL SETTING

"The England that is about us", said J. R. Green in 1874, "dates from the American war. It was then that the moral, the philanthropic, the religious ideas which have moulded English Society into its present shape first broke the spiritual torpor of the Eighteenth Century"¹. And of the period moulded by these ideas Professor G. M. Trevelyan adds the judgement that the first fifty years, stretching from the American war to the Reform Bill 'compose a single epoch'².

That epoch was the period of transition between two civilizations. The civilization of the saddle and the pack horse gave way to that of the coach and the canal; the civilization of 'subsistence agriculture' to that of machines and factories; the civilization of a paternal aristocracy to that of a political middle class.

The transition was turbulent. The American Revolution was countered by the French Revolution; the gales of both blew over the troubled waters of the Industrial Revolution; and the shadow of Napoleon Bonaparte fell upon the whole scene and darkened the confusion.

1. J.R. Green: History of the English People, Vol. iv, p. 272. (The history was first published in 1874, D.N.B. Sub Nom)
2. G.M. Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century Preface. Trevelyan speaks particularly of political history, but his observation is true even in wider areas. The opening pages of this history contain a masterly survey of the England of this period, to which this chapter is indebted.

The tumult of the time aggravated the worst features of the old civilization before they could be mitigated by the amenities of the new. The early liberalism - when the younger Pitt became the first Prime Minister to ask the House of Commons to reform itself;¹ when Thomas Hardy founded the London Corresponding Society, and Grey the Friends Of The People;² when Horace Walpole rejoiced with Hannah More over the fall of the Bastille;³ and Burns drank the jubilant toast to the 'last verse of the last chapter of the Book of Kings'⁴ - very soon became but an unreal memory. Britain which greeted the dawn of the Revolution became affrighted by the shadows.⁵ Her ruling classes were driven by the Terror across the Channel to an extremity of panic, an almost literal madness,⁶ in which they 'saw Englishmen as Jacobins walking', and committed deeds of injustice and savagery for which that madness is the sole and insufficient excuse. To the aristocracy of Britain the French Revolution was a microcosm in which they could see the inevitable and terrible end of any movement toward democracy. Paris had clearly demonstrated, they thought, that Reform, even well intentioned Reform, was, of its own evil momentum, irresistibly carried to chaos; and that the only safety lay in grateful acquiescence in the existing order, and swift and ruthless measures with every would-be reformer.

1. Rosebery: Pitt, p. 69-70
Parliamentary History xxv, 432.
2. P.A. Brown: The French Revolution in English History
p. 54-55.
3. Ibid p. 37.
4. Ibid p. 32.
5. Bready: Barnardo, p. 17.
6. G.M. Trevelyan: Clio, p. 110.

Unfortunately in the generation in which it was so grimly determined that laws and institutions should not change, economic life was changing at a rate unequalled for centuries. And the laws and institutions of the old day were pitiably inadequate to meet the exigencies of the new. The consequent disharmony was in large measure the secret of a generation of appalling injustice, and unbelievable misery.

To aggravate the evil, at a time when the victims of that disharmony needed most to make their wretchedness known, the liberty even to protest was summarily denied. Though Enclosure Acts were progressively taking from poor¹ people the privileges that had made existence possible; though hapless multitudes were being herded by the unspeakable factory towns into places that were not the² 'homes of a race' but 'the barracks of an industry'; though even above the din of the new machinery there began to be heard the 'crying of the children', who, driven by brutal taskmasters, dragged through weary lives of factory toil³ 'half-dressed but not half-fed'; though a hundred colliers

1. "Between 1700 and 1760 we have record of over 200 Enclosure Acts and over 300,000 acres enclosed; between 1761 and 1800 of 2,000 Acts and over 2,000,000 acres enclosed; and in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century of 2,000,000 more acres and nearly 2,000 more Enclosure Acts".

Cole: A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, Volume 1, pp.28 and 57.

See also Hammond: The Village Labourer, pp.26-106.

In 1801 Arthur Young wrote, "By nineteen out of 20 Enclosure Bills the poor are injured and most grossly".

G.M. Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 146.

2. Hammond: The Town Labourer, pp. 38-39.

3. Alfred: History of the Factory Movement, Volume 1, pp.99-100.

might be killed in a Northumberland mine without even a coroner's inquest;¹ though misery might be men's lot, and starvation their prospect, even the faintest protest was forbidden by laws specially enacted and savagely administered-administered moreover by the very people for whose advantage they were devised. Even the old safeguard of Habeas Corpus² was at times denied, and magistrates with a Bourbon mentality became unfettered arbiters of a nation's freedom. In short the cherished liberties of the past were ruthlessly discarded. Tyranny was dressed in Ermine, and oppression slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent.

It is difficult to picture the England of those days. On the one hand were a central government which 'did nothing to secure the public safety, provided no schools, made no roads, gave no relief to the poor',³ a parliament dominated by the owners of rotten boroughs, and an aristocracy at once cultured, magnificent, and dissolute; and on the other hand⁴ was a lower class, illiterate, sodden with gin, given over to vicious living and brutal pastimes, and represented only too faithfully in Hogarth's 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane'. It was an England in which the promise of later days had scarcely begun to dawn.

The external miseries were perhaps not the worst feature of the times. Spiritual resources were wanting. For the

1. Hammond: The Rise of Modern Industry, p.243.

2. e.g. In 1794 and 1817.

3. Halevy: History of England in 1815, p.32. There were of course no police until the time of Sir Robert Peel.

4. Prison reform was only touched. In 1784 Howard had to mark "no alteration" to most of the prisons he had revisited. Public whipping of women was still permitted. And children could be condemned to death for petty theft.

P.A. Brown: The French Revolution in English History, pp.42 & 163

most part the church 'had no light of its own for the awakening or the guidance of the age'.¹ Anglican and Non-Conformists alike fulfilled little spiritual function, and served mainly as auxiliary props for the state's conservatism. What life there was lived chiefly in the despised Methodist Mission, or in the parish of the equally despised Evangelical clergyman, of whom, till John Newton came in 1780, Romaine - preaching at evenings in a dark-ened church, by the light of the candle in his own hand - was the only representative in all London.²

The wider fields of Empire looked no better. Pitt and Carleton, indeed, had just granted in Canada a religious toleration at that time unexampled. But on the other side of the world Australia was just taking its place as a convict colony fitted to make yet more terrible the strengthened weapon of English criminal law. India had recently produced fearful witness to the iniquities which might fester under cover of the white man's rule in distant places where political power was divorced from political responsibility. And outraged Africa seemed to be assuming an inexhaustible role as a human game preserve for captive labour.

A dark time! And yet, said Green, this was the time from which came the moral, the philanthropic, the religious

1. Hammond: The Rise of Modern Industry, p. 253.
2. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 53.
The church officials could not prohibit Romaine from preaching, but they could refuse to provide lighting.
See also D.N.B. Art. John Newton.

ideas which transformed later England. For the brutal and obvious forces of the time were not the only forces at work. When social and economic life reached their nadir, Intellect and Imagination reached their zenith. Cowper, Burns, Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Southey, Landor, Byron, Keats, and Shelley, the most illustrious poets 'which the age produced anywhere in the world',¹ lifted their voices in 'the greatest burst of inspired song'² since the Renaissance. Of still more importance, Conscience awoke, and, at a period critically opportune, created a moral sentiment that put permanently on a different basis England's attitude to distant and defenceless peoples, and to her own brutal and degraded masses at home. Within a single generation, like a group of mountain springs, there appeared in England a series of religious and humanitarian movements which altered the whole course of English history, influenced most of Europe, and affected the life of three other continents.

These movements sprang out of a new doctrine of responsibility toward the unprivileged, a doctrine which received its chief impulse from the Evangelical emphasis on the value of the human soul, and, hence, of the individual. The first expression of that feeling was in the abolition of the slave trade. Then the implications of the doctrine of responsibility widened. Britain took a new attitude to India, removed the

1. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 339.

2. Ramsay Muir: A History of the British Commonwealth, Vol. II, p. 223.

restrictions against missionaries, initiated a system of education, and prepared the way for reforms such as the abolition of suttee. A still further implication followed, and the British people, in a time of national stringency, laid upon themselves a tax of £20.000.000 to give freedom to the Negroes of the West Indies. The influence of this enthusiasm was not confined to Britain; it was felt by every slave trading nation in Europe. And in several nations it was British influence, British pressure, and even British money, which led to the abolition of the legal slave trade, and the long efforts to end the subsequent smuggling.¹

While these movements of humanity and religion were being undertaken for distant peoples, movements of scarcely less significance were affecting the course of life in England itself. Among the most important was that for popular education. A new era commenced with the spreading of the Sunday Schools, and continued with the founding of societies for national education. The support for popular education was derived in large degree from the religious conviction that every person had a sacred right to be able to read his Bible. The increase in literacy was therefore paralleled by the formation of great Tract and Bible Societies which diligently broadcast religious literature, especially the Bible.

All these movements had secondary effects. Literacy

1. Altogether Great Britain spent £10,000,000 trying to end the illegitimate traffic.
Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, p. 23.

was the necessary prelude to democracy. And the Sunday Schools awakened interest in children, revealed conditions of child life, and, in its teachers, raised up to do battle for the oppressed child a host of spokesmen, who supplied the knowledge, and created the sympathy which made possible the subsequent victories of the children's champions.¹

But these movements were not all. The terrible injustice of the criminal law stirred up opponents who commenced the reform of the whole penal and judicial system. The growing knowledge of the conditions of factory life led to the first Factory Act, and the beginning of industrial reform. The dragging opposition of Parliament led to a sweeping reform of Parliament itself. The new spirit of tolerance led to Roman Catholic Emancipation. And, finally, the misery that inevitably remained in this period of transition was alleviated by the growth of a new and more sensitive philanthropy, a philanthropy defective indeed in its attitude to the cause of the misery, but nevertheless marking, as did all the other movements, an increased feeling of responsibility to the unprivileged.

In short, this turbulent epoch, ushered in beneath such dark and ominous clouds, witnessed the beginning of so many

1. "Society has not realized how great is her debt to this voluntary association of religious zealots for the part they played in breaking industrial serfdom...Hundreds of Sunday School teachers signed petitions protesting against the fatigue inflicted upon factory children whom they had tried to instruct; and the semi-religious agitation of such popular champions as Oastler and J.R. Stephens would have missed fire without the sympathetic atmosphere created by the Sunday Schools, sworn champions of the outcast child."

Bready: Shaftesbury, pp. 174-5.

movements which profoundly affected future generations that, for all its grim and terrible features, it must ever be regarded as a seed plot in English history.

But, though progress be broad its impulse is always narrow. Professor Gilbert Murray reminds us that 'the¹ moving force in human progress is not widespread', that 'the uplifting of man has ever been the work of a chosen² few'. And the Chosen Few in this generation included a peculiar company whom a 'facetious journalist' is said to have labelled 'The Clapham Sect'.³

B. THE GATHERING OF THE SECT

"Some rivers spring from ..a group of pools".⁴ This analogy to which Gladstone had recourse in describing the Evangelical movement may be used not less appropriately to describe that section of the movement which acquired the nickname, 'The Clapham Sect'. And in both the greater and the lesser movements though there are many sources there is one from which issues the dominant stream: in the former John Wesley; in the latter William Wilberforce. And in both the spring must be sought in an Evangelical 'New Birth'.

England

Few passages of the time are more familiar than the tale of Wilberforce's tour on the continent with Isaac Milner

1. Gilbert Murray: Religio Grammatici, p.28.
2. Ibid
3. See Appendix One.
4. W.E. Gladstone: Gleanings of Past Years, Vol.7, p.205.

in 1785, his reading of Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, and his subsequent conversion. But the story has wider reaches than can be found even in the dramatic life of Wilberforce himself; without that conversion there could have been no Clapham Sect. The news of the conversion brought dismay to many of Wilberforce's friends; but it was soon bringing new hope to other men, and centring their thoughts on Wilberforce as the promising advocate for their various causes. In 1785 when Wilberforce began his tour of the continent a young Cambridge graduate, Thomas Clarkson, had just read to the Senate his prize essay Anne Liceat Invitos in Servitutem Dare?¹ He had begun that essay with his mind dwelling on academic distinction; he had finished it overwhelmed by the iniquities which his studies had convinced him were true, and his conscience had told him were intolerable. While Wilberforce was in Europe reflecting on Doddridge's Rise and Progress Clarkson used to wander in the woods near his home, haunted by the facts he had discovered to exist, and repeating to himself the conviction, "Then surely some person should interfere".² He determined to do something himself, and resolved, as a preliminary move, to publish his essay. In the course of publication he came in contact with some interested Quakers who introduced him to Granville Sharp, already celebrated for having in 1772 won the decision that made slavery illegal in England.³

1. The Essay was read in June 1785.

Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. i.
pp. 209 & 217.

2. Ibid Vol. i: pp. 210-211.

3. Ibid Vol. i: p. 216; and Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 89 et seq.

Sharp and Clarkson and these Quakers began to think much and to consult often about the possibility of ending also the slave trade. While they were eagerly exploring for possible sources of assistance Clarkson came in contact with Wilberforce, recently returned from his continental tour. They immediately recognized that here was just the man they wanted. They were in no wise afraid to face any difficulties nor to undertake any labours. But their battle could be won only through parliament. And their great need was for the right parliamentary champion, a man of distinction and ability whom the House would not be able to ignore nor find it easy to overcome. Wilberforce with his wealth, his popularity, his eloquence, and his recently avowed dedication to religious aims, was such a man as they had scarcely dared to hope for. Clarkson set to work to win Wilberforce for the cause.¹

Though Clarkson did not know it he was but adding another appeal to many others. Wilberforce had first become interested in the slave trade when he was a boy, and when only fourteen years of age he had written a precocious

1. Clarkson said of his first visit to Wilberforce, "The manner in which Mr. Wilberforce had received me...tended much to enlarge my hopes, that...(the trade)..might become at length the subject of a parliamentary inquiry". He soon added the determination that he "should never lose sight of Mr. Wilberforce, but, on the other hand.. should rather omit visiting some others, than paying a proper attention to him". And shortly afterwards he reported that his friends "were of the opinion that the time was approaching when we might unite, and that the Union might prudently commence as soon as ever Mr. Wilberforce would give his word that he would take up the question in parliament". Granville Sharp and the London Committee were not less sensible of the importance of securing Wilberforce's leadership.

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 1, pp.243, 244,250. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 153.

letter to a Yorkshire paper denouncing the 'odious traffic in human flesh'.¹ Later, though still in his unregenerate days, he had begun to gather information about the state of slavery in Antigua.² And in 1783 he had consulted with the Rev. Mr. Ramsay, a retired missionary who was one of the earliest champions of the West Indian slaves.³ During these years Wilberforce confesses that his interest in slavery was that of a dilettante, and that his own distinction was his darling object.⁴ But following his conversion, and his new passion to devote his life to some worthy cause, many influences had been reviving his interest even before his first meeting with Clarkson. However his decision was made, its significance was increased by the early association with these other crusaders. The later band of Clapham labourers was already being formed. Clarkson indeed never lived in Clapham; but he may rightly be numbered with the Clapham elect. And Granville Sharp was later to reside⁵ at

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 9. Clarkson seems not to have known of any other influences which attracted Wilberforce to the cause of the slaves, nor even of the important meeting at Middleton's (See Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 142-6) where Wilberforce formally announced his intention to take up the cause.

See Coupland; Wilberforce, p. 90

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 1, pp. 253-254.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 147-148.
3. Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 148.
4. Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 149.
5. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 539. He lived there with his brothers, not - as "a critic with the soul of a church-warden" might object - quite within the parochial bounds of Clapham, but near enough to be counted one of the Clapham group. How long he lived there both Stephen and his biographers neglect to tell.

the distance of a few bowshots' from the central council chamber of the Clapham Sect.¹

The West Indies

The Clapham Sect was to cut a wider swath. In 1783, the year in which Wilberforce had consulted with James Ramsay about slavery in the West Indies, a young Scottish lawyer, James Stephen, en route to St. Christopher's happened to be at Barbadoes, a port of call, during a so-called 'trial' of Negroes, a trial marked equally by the injustice of the proceedings, and the barbarity of the punishment.² That young lawyer conceived at that trial an undying hatred of slavery. He held an important position at St. Christopher's; but, contrary to general custom he refused to own slaves, and endeavoured whenever possible to free those who served him.³ In 1794 he returned to England still burning with indignation at the iniquities which festered under the slave system. Naturally enough he turned for guidance to the man already

1. Clapham is now a part of London; but at the beginning of the last century it was still a 'village of nightingales' separated from the city by three miles of pleasant driving. At that time Clapham was the country residence of many wealthy people, of whom the men who figure in this thesis were the most notable group. Of that group a number, as the following pages will show, owned their own magnificent houses, situated within comfortable proximity of each other. Those of the group who did not own houses in Clapham visited and lived with the others - especially during the heat of their crusades - with an easy informality which seems almost incredible in this day. The group, nearly all of them men of distinction, bound together by the ties of Evangelical religion, of family, and of common interests, displayed such a striking fellowship and fraternity that they were ironically given the nickname: the Clapham Sect. (See Appendix One)
2. See D.N.B. Sub Nom. & Stephen: Slavery Delineated Preface pp. liii-lv. The punishment was burning alive.
3. Stephen: Op. cit. Preface, pp. liii-lv.

becoming known in England as the slave's champion. He sought out William Wilberforce to discuss slavery with him. At that time there seemed little that Stephen could do, for his practice and his livelihood depended on the good-will of the West Indians. He agreed, however, to make some use of his position by collecting information for Wilberforce¹ - an unintentional augury of the future. Five years later he gave up his practice in the West Indies, and returned permanently to England, where his great gifts as a lawyer soon were to make him a leading figure in the Prize Appeal Court of the Privy Council.² From that time he openly threw in his lot with Wilberforce, and from the first his trumpet gave no uncertain sound.

Meanwhile the West Indies had brought another important figure in touch with Clapham. In 1785, the year of Clarkson's dedication to the cause of the slaves and of Wilberforce's conversion, another Scot, Zachary Macaulay, a mere lad, who had gone to the West Indies as overseer to a Jamaica estate, wrote home to his family that he found himself growing 'callous and indifferent' to the suffering of the Negroes whom he used to see in the fields about him 'cursing and bawling' under the incessant cracks of the drivers' whips.³ He did his best however 'to render the bitter cup of servitude as palatable as possible'.⁴ But in

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 202.

2. D.N.B. Sub Nom.

3. Viscountess Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 8.

4. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 759.

1789, the year in which Wilberforce made his first and most eloquent speech on the slave trade, young Macaulay, having attained his majority, put aside 'really great offers'¹ and left forever the slave plantations which he hated. He returned to England to visit a sister who during his absence had married a Mr. Thomas Babington of Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. Babington was a man of high character and sincere piety, and his influence on Macaulay at an impressionable period deeply affected Macaulay's whole life.² Babington also, as will shortly be seen, soon provided the link between Macaulay and Clapham.

India

Slavery was not to exhaust the energies of the Clapham Sect. Other interests were already drawing other figures into the growing circle. India as well as the West Indies had been looking to Wilberforce.

At the time Wilberforce was writing his boyish letter to the Yorkshire paper two young Scotsmen, John Shore and Charles Grant, youthful appointees of the East India Company, were beginning in India careers that were to lead the one to be Governor-General of India and the other to be the most powerful member of the East India Council in England, 'the real ruler of the rulers of the East, the Director of the Court of Directors'.³ At that time the two young officials

1. G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 10.

2. In 1795 Macaulay said of Rothley Temple, "To this place I owe myself. If there be in me...any desires superior to those of the beasts which perish, here were they first called into action".

Knutsford, Op. Cit, p. 90.

3. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 553.

were unacquainted with each other, and a suggestion to either of them of future association with such a group as the Clapham Sect, or in such enterprises as afterward occupied their attention would have merely provoked derision. But in 1776, the year in which Wilberforce went to Cambridge and met Thomas Gisborne,¹ Charles Grant, after a severe family tragedy, was converted; and commenced a friendship, which was to be intimate and life-long, with John Shore, - a kindred spirit, then also 'at the beginning of his own Christian career'.² Ten years later in 1786 - the year of beginnings - when Wilberforce was taking his first communion, and Clarkson deciding to print his Anne Liceat, Grant began to be occupied with the possibility of establishing in India, under the sanction and patronage of the government, an extensive scheme of Christian Missions. He was much encouraged in this project by a new friend David Brown, who had just come out to India as Chaplain to the Military Orphanage in Calcutta.³ Brown had been a friend of Charles Simeon of Cambridge, who could keep him informed from what quarters in England sympathy for such a scheme might probably be found. Hence, when he and Grant had completed their mission plan, and were making appeal for it to England they confined

1. See Infra, p.21

2. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 64.

Grant sailed for India in 1767, and arrived in 1768. Shore sailed in 1768 and arrived in 1769. They did not become acquainted at all till 1774.

Morris: Life of Grant, p. 14.

Teignmouth; Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1. pp. 11-19 & 111. D.N.B. Sub Nom.

3. Ibid, p. 101.

their hopes of practical results among the clergy to Simeon himself, and among the laity to the now notable William Wilberforce. In 1790 Grant returned to England and met Wilberforce,¹ to whom later he was careful to introduce John Shore, when, in 1792, Shore also returned to England.²

Beginning, then, in 1785 there were three men in England: Wilberforce, Sharp, and Clarkson; two men in the West Indies: Stephen and Macaulay; and two men in India: Grant and Shore, who were destined to labour in Clapham. And at Clapham others would be waiting.

Clapham and Cambridge

The most permanent element in the Clapham Sect is to be found in the Thornton family. John Thornton, the uncle of Wilberforce, was already at Clapham when in 1756 Henry Venn, one of the most celebrated of the early Evangelicals, began his ministry there.³ John Thornton had three sons, Samuel, Robert, and Henry, all members of Parliament, of whom Henry was the most distinguished.⁴ Henry became perhaps the most intimate friend of Wilberforce; and in his house at Clapham the famous library, designed by Pitt, oval in shape, and 'curiously wainscotted with books',⁵ became the chosen meeting place of the Clapham Sect.

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1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 176.
 2. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 180 and Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 368.
 3. Venn Family Annals, p. 145.
 4. D.N.B. Art. Henry Thornton.
 5. Stephen, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 524.



Library at Battersea Rise House.

(From the Clapham Antiquarian Society)

The Oval Library at Henry Thornton's
Favourite resort for Clapham 'Cabinet Councils'.

"His (Henry Thornton's) house on the Common was the chosen meeting place for the discussion of all the many religious and social schemes with the furtherance of which Clapham became associated. If, in the temper of the worshipper at holy places, one seeks to have the precise locality pointed out where the spirit of the place started on its mission through the world, the pilgrim's feet may be directed to the library in Henry Thornton's house This was the spot where most of the world embracing schemes were discussed and planned".

Venn Family Annals, p. 146.

The portrait over the mantelpiece is of Henry Thornton himself.

In 1792 the influence of the Thorntons brought another important figure to Clapham. John Thornton having become an intimate friend of Henry Venn not only presented him with the living at Huddersfield but paved the way for a son, John Venn, later to become rector of Clapham.¹ John Venn, 'a man of culture, judgement, and sanctified common sense',² and, like his father, an ardent Evangelical, was offered the living of Clapham in 1792. He began residence in Clapham in 1793³, and was thenceforth the fellow conspirator, the personal friend, and the spiritual guide of the Clapham brotherhood, who formed at that time 'the most notable congregation in all England'.⁴

Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, John Shore (later Lord Teignmouth), Charles Grant, Henry Thornton, and John Venn: these are the members of the 'Sect' who were actually resident for some period in or near Clapham. With these may be included three other associates who were to prove valiant associates in the Clapham crusades: Charles Elliott of Grove House, Clapham;⁵ E.J. Eliot, brother-in-law of Pitt, who lived on Thornton's estate in the house which Wilberforce was afterwards to own, and who, until his early death in 1797, was

1. Venn Family Annals, p. 127.

2. Stock: History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol. 1, p. 41.

3. Venn Family Annals, p. 127. Cf. Wilberforce's diary for March 12, 1793. "Venn preached an excellent introductory sermon. I received the sacrament and had much serious reflection". Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 16.

4. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 147.

5. John Venn, Life of Henry Venn, p. 55.

to be a valuable link between Pitt and Wilberforce;¹ and William Smith, M. P. for Norwich, who, however, was not an Evangelical but 'an avowed Socinian',² but whom the others welcomed none the less heartily, and who entered with no less enthusiasm into their cherished projects.

The roll is not yet complete. The Clapham Sect had 'non-resident' members, some of whom were scarcely less important than those who actually had local habitation within the 'holy village'. But, though the circle grows wider the ties remain hardly less intimate.

The intellectual centre of the Evangelical party was Cambridge University, where the two chief leaders were Isaac Milner and Charles Simeon. Milner was 'an Evangelical Dr. Johnson',³ a 'sort of Grand Llama'⁴ of the Evangelical party; but, though his influence was by no means negligible in Clapham, he did not enter much into their practical labours, and hence, will play little part in the following pages. The other great leader was Charles Simeon, 'St. Charles of Cambridge',⁵ who, if he had not quite the intellectual distinction of Milner, had an even greater practical influence.⁶ Like Milner, Simeon was closely linked to -----

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 234.

2. Venn Family Annals, p. 145.

3. Overton: History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 61.

4. Ibid, p. 63.

5. Stephen; Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 578.

6. T. B. Macaulay wrote in 1844, "As to Simeon, if you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway in the church was far greater than that of any primate."

G. O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 68.

Clapham. In his student days at Cambridge he had been the friend of John Venn, and through the son had come to know the father, Henry Venn, through whose influence he had been brought into the Evangelical fold.¹ From the first therefore he entered the Clapham group as a member of their spiritual family.

Cambridge provided still other links with Clapham. While Wilberforce was at St. John's college his next door neighbour and near friend was one Thomas Gisborne. After leaving college the friends' had lost touch with one another. But the news that Wilberforce had taken up the cause of abolition prompted Gisborne, now a Clergyman at Yoxall, Straffordshire, to join hands again with his old friend. He therefore wrote to Wilberforce, and so recommenced a friendship that lasted till death.² Gisborne, indeed, became so intimately associated with the Clapham activities that Yoxall Lodge, his home, became almost a second Clapham; and because the Claphamites could not always be at Yoxall Lodge, Gisborne 'resided a large part of each year with Wilberforce'.³ But, to gather up the threads, Gisborne had married the sister of Thomas Babington, and soon

1. Carus: Memoirs of Charles Simeon, p. 23.

2. Life of Wilberforce: Vol. i, p. 273 et passim.

3. Venn Family Annals: p. 146. Stephen writes of Gisborne, "Among the sectaries of that village (Clapham) he took his share in labour and in deliberation, whether the abolition of the slave trade, the diffusion of Christianity, the war against vice and ignorance, or the advancement of Evangelical theology, was the object of the passing day".

Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 535.

introduced Babington to Wilberforce.¹ And Babington, it will be remembered, had married the sister of Zachary Macaulay, and in turn introduced Macaulay to the brotherhood.

Auxiliary Crusaders

There were still others whose influence and aid were to count for much in Clapham enterprises. Mention may be made of Charles Buchanan, Henry Martyn, and Josiah Pratt. Charles Buchanan was another Scot, a young prodigal who had been wandering around Europe, having for his sole stock-in-trade 'a lie and a violin',² when he was converted and came under the influence of the common friend of the Sect, John Newton. As he seemed a promising convert the friends became interested in him. Henry Thornton sent him to Cambridge, where Simeon watched over him.³ Later Grant inspired him with the desire to go to India, and provided him with a chaplaincy in the East India Company.⁴ In consequence Buchanan was able to render powerful assistance to Clapham causes both in India and at home. Henry Martyn was 'Simeon's spiritual son'.⁵ Under the counsels of that eminent teacher, the guidance of Mr. Wilberforce,

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 14
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 278.
 Babington had apparently been at college the same time as Wilberforce, but had not known him.
- Colquhoun: Wilberforce and His Friends, p. 214.
2. Sir John Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 166.
3. Pearson: Memoirs of Charles Buchanan, Vol. 1, pp. 20-28.
4. Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 187 & 220.
5. Moule: The Evangelical School in the Church of England, p. 13.

and the active aid of Mr. Grant'¹ he became an heroic Missionary delegate of the Clapham Sect. Josiah Pratt was an Evangelical minister, a close friend of the Claphamites, the first editor of the Christian Observer, and one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. In time also there came the second generation of Claphamites, of whom the most distinguished were James and George Stephen, T. B. Macaulay, and Robert and Charles Grant - all afterwards knighted. And one must remember that in 1786, the year in which Wilberforce decided to take up the cause of slavery, there was born in Castle Hedingham, Essex, Thomas Fowell Buxton,² to whom nearly forty years afterwards Wilberforce was to pass the mantle of leadership in the last campaign for the Emancipation of the slaves. And, finally, no account of the Clapham Sect can overlook the eminent Mrs. Hannah More, the 'Queen of the Methodists',³ and the appointed agent of Wilberforce and Thornton in their philanthropic activities. "Equally with Wilberforce and Simeon, she was one of the 'great men' of the party".⁴

Individual Characteristics

This group, at first so widely scattered but soon to be gathered in the Clapham mansions and to share in Clapham

1. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 554.
2. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 2.
3. i.e. the Evangelicals. Cobbett called her "the Old Bishop in Petticoats". She was never married, but, in the custom of the day, assumed the 'Mrs.' as a title of respectability. Overton: English Church in the 19th Century, p. 91. Political Register April 20, 1822.
4. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 381.

'Cabinet Councils', consisted of no ordinary persons. Granville Sharp, the oldest of the band was, like Venn, 'the product of an unbroken line of theologians',¹ and a most remarkable product. Through poverty in his family he was in early youth apprenticed to a grocer; but his humble start did not prevent rapid and distinguished attainments. He studied Hebrew to confute a Jew, and Greek to confute a Socinian, and to such effect that he made original contributions to the study of both languages.² But Greek and Hebrew did not exhaust his versatile energies. While an apprentice he heard one of his masters mention a claim to some barony. Granville at once 'buried himself in pedigrees, feoffments, and sepulchral inscriptions',³ and, incredible as it may sound, actually established the title and sent the draper to sit in the House of Lords as the Baron Willoughby de Parham.⁴ Still more remarkable, when opposed by all the weight of legal opinion in England including the imposing judgement of York, Talbot, Mansfield and Blackstone, he gave two years to the study of law, proved the authorities wrong, won a great legal battle in the Somerset case, and established the memorable principle: "As soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground, he becomes free".⁵ Sharp in fact was never dismayed by any task.

1. Lascelles: Granville Sharp, p. 1. 2. D.N.B. Sub. Nom.
3. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 540.
4. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 540.
Lascelles: Granville Sharp, p. 4 & 6.
5. Prince Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp. p. 92.

The more formidable the enemy the more courageously would he enter the lists against it. He had not the gifts of a leader; he was emotional and erratic, and strangely occupied with Old Testament prophecies; but he had great capacity for patient labour, and he was of a singularly attractive nature. Sir James Stephen presented him with no unearned accolade, "As long as Granville Sharp survived it was too soon to proclaim that the age of chivalry was gone".¹

Thomas Clarkson, less versatile and not so winsome, was also like Sharp gifted with a prodigious capacity for patient, laborious investigation; and, like Sharp, though unfitted to lead made an admirable henchman. For tirelessly pursuing the trail of evidence, for stirring up Committees and Corresponding Societies, for wielding a dull but voluminous pen, for faithfully performing the long drudgery essential to the ultimate success he was suited to a degree.²

Zachary Macaulay, 'the austere and silent father of the greatest talker the world has ever known',³ took up the work of Clarkson and developed it in ways of which Clarkson would have been quite incapable. Indeed, while Macaulay was meagrely furnished with the gifts which commend themselves to popular acclaim, he was above all others the man

1. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 540.

2. Once when Clarkson was on a visit to Paris for a month he wrote to Mirabeau every day a letter containing 16-20 pages to make sure that Mirabeau was kept fully informed about the slave trade. (D.N.B. Sub Nom) Another time to get some evidence he needed he sought a sailor whom he had once seen, but whose name he did not know. He systematically searched the ships of port after port till at last he found the sailor on the 317th ship he had visited.

Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 172-177.

3. Cornish: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 1, p. 13.

who, with no concern for his own advantage and with no thought of any rewarding glory, uncomplainingly, year in and year out, bore the burden and heat of the day. His companions made the evenings eloquent; but he was the man who 'rose and took pen in hand at four o'clock in the morning'.¹ He sifted the evidence, gathered the facts, and presented the arguments from which his associates massed the terrible indictments which moved anti-slavery audiences to tumultuous applause. He was, said Buxton, the anti-slavery tutor of them all. And he laboured not only tirelessly but with extraordinary efficiency. His powers of analysis were astonishing, and his memory at once ecumenical and accurate.² When the brotherhood were at a loss for some needed information they would say, 'Let us look it up in Macaulay',³ and from long experience they laid down the dictum, 'Whatever Macaulay says, may be taken for gospel, and quoted'.⁴ When Fowell Buxton was preparing a dictionary for private reference he called it 'My Macaulay'.⁵ Buxton indeed paid no unconsidered tribute

1. G. W. E. Russell: The Household of Faith, p. 225.
2. "Blue books and state papers were child's play to him, however dull or voluminous; he would attend to half-a-dozen charitable committees during the day, and refresh himself after dinner with a parliamentary folio that would have choked an alderman by the sight of it alone. His memory was so retentive, that, without the trouble of reference, he could collate the papers of one session with those of three or four preceding years; he analyzed with such rapidity that he could reduce to ten or twenty pages all that was worth extracting from five hundred; his acuteness was so great that no fallacy of argument escaped him, and no sophistry could bewilder him; and nevertheless he was accuracy and truth itself.. Every friend to slavery knew Macaulay to be his most dangerous foe". Such was the judgement of Sir George Stephen, who knew Macaulay intimately.
Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp.51-52.
3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p.250.
4. Christian Observer, 1839, p.804.
5. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p.123.

when in 1833 on the passing of the Emancipation Bill he wrote to Macaulay, "My sober and deliberate opinion is, that you have done more towards this consummation than any other man".¹

The intimate friend and fellow labourer of Macaulay was the other West Indian, James Stephen, who, with gifts of speech far greater than Macaulay's, with the relentless logic of a great lawyer, with a fiery and terrible temper than needed all Macaulay's steadiness to keep it in check, with fervour that did not like Macaulay's glow unchanged for years, but that rather flared intermittently into white fury,² was another Clapham giant whom the enemy always recognized as one of their really formidable foes. Stephen moreover, like Macaulay, wielded an assiduous and powerful pen. He was described as 'the ablest pamphleteer of his day',³ and he and Macaulay together were considered 'authors-general for our cause'.⁴

Charles Grant and John Shore were another notable couple. They brought to Clapham the authoritative knowledge about Indian affairs that Stephen and Macaulay

1. Buxton: Memoirs of T.F. Buxton, p. 282. Buxton said the same in Parliament, "If the Negro should be emancipated he would be more indebted to Mr. Macaulay than to any other man living".
Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, xviii. 519
2. Once when Stephen had burst into indignation at the inactivity of the government, Macaulay turned to young George Stephen, as the elder Stephen left, and said, "In anger your father is terrific".
George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 33.
3. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 116.
4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 207.

brought about West Indian. Grant became the most distinguished Director of the East India Company, 'the headpiece of the Company in Leadenhall Street, the mouthpiece of the Company in St. Stephen's, the oracle on all subjects of Indian import',¹ and 'the authority from whom Wilberforce derived at once the impulse and the knowledge'² for the East Indian battles. In the East India Company he was celebrated not only for his masterly understanding of the 'entire range and the intricate combinations' of the Company's affairs, but also 'for nerves which set fatigue at defiance';³ and at Clapham he was held in awe for piety which 'though ever active, was too profound for speech' - a praise 'to which, among their other glories, it was permitted to few of his neighbours there to attain or to aspire'.⁴ In addition to leading the movement to establish Christian missions in India, Grant wielded the influence through which Buchanan, Henry Martyn, Thomason, Corrie, and other Evangelical chaplains secured⁵ appointment to India.

In his labours for India Grant was aided by John

1. Stock: History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol. 1, p. 54.
2. George Smith: Twelve Indian Statesmen, p.2.
3. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p.553.
4. Ibid, p.553.
5. Morris: Life of Grant, p.220.

Shore,¹ a man of quite different character, without Grant's strength, and, as Governor-General rather well-intentioned than competent;² but with great Oriental scholarship, a discerning knowledge of the people of India, genuine piety, and an unflagging enthusiasm for Clapham enterprises. In 1797, at the conclusion of his term as Governor-General, Shore was made Baron Teignmouth, and brought to the Clapham Sect its sole title.³

Henry Thornton in many ways resembled Charles Grant. He was calm and judicial but resolute and capable. He had the practical sagacity of a successful man of business, the expert knowledge of a Governor of the Bank of England, and the wide grasp of the abstract problems of finance that enabled him to write a Treatise on Paper Credit, which John Stuart Mill pronounced long afterwards to be the clearest exposition of the subject written in English.⁴

An unusual company they were, a group of men 'whose brains and brilliancy could not be denied even by those who sneered at their religion;⁵ and, withal, a well

1. Lord Macaulay, who had lived in India for four years as Member of the Supreme Council, said, "Lord Teignmouth governed India at Calcutta. Grant governed India in Leadenhall Street".

G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 68. George Smith calls Grant "the purest and ablest statesman whom Scotland..has ever sent to India".

Twelve Indian Statesmen, p. 1.

2. "After the utmost allowance has been made for the difficulties of Sir John Shore's position..no very great praise can be bestowed upon his conduct of affairs". (i.e. as Governor-General). Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 9, p. 721.
3. Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1, p. 455.
4. D.N.B. Art: Henry Thornton.
5. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 147.

balanced group. Sharp and Clarkson and especially Macaulay brought monumental capacity for research; Stephen, destined to be Master in Chancery, expert legal knowledge, and, together with Macaulay, first hand knowledge of the slave trade; Thornton, business sagacity; Grant and Shore extensive and intimate acquaintance with India, and valuable influence at the source of control; and the retinue of eager associates the necessary personnel to take care of the endless details of the Clapham campaigns.

Having listed all these, it is necessary to return to William Wilberforce, 'the Agamemnon of the host..the very sun of the Claphamic system'.¹ With all the gifts of the others, without Wilberforce they would never have been called a 'Sect'. Wilberforce needed the others to make him what he was; but the others needed Wilberforce to make a river from a group of pools. Wilberforce was a leader to the manner born. With an ample fortune, a liberal education, and high talents; with a natural eloquence that Pitt declared to be the greatest he ever knew;² with a voice which in the melodious beauty of its tones has seldom been surpassed in the history of parliament, which 'resembled an Eolian harp controlled by the touch of a St. Cecilia',³ and which earned for him the

1. Stephen; Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 530.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. v, p. 241.

3. Stephen; Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 471.

sobriquet, 'the nightingale of the House of Commons';¹ with graces of personality that made him the darling figure of society, and wit that shone even in the most brilliant company of his brilliant day; with an overflowing capacity for friendship, and yet a fidelity to conscience against which the interests of himself and his friends appealed in vain; with religious convictions that made him indeed harsh with his own infirmities, but, which, by their transparent sincerity made him the spiritual monitor of men who knew him best; with standards in public life that won for him the adherence of the highest moral feeling of the nation, and marked him as 'the authentic keeper of the nation's conscience';² with the additional advantage of being the intimate friend of one of Britain's greatest Prime Ministers;³ with - it must be admitted - conservative tendencies which sometimes blinded him as to where oppression might lie, but with a burning passion to end oppression where he saw it; with a genuine love of man for himself, and 'none of Society's uneasy distaste for the "lower orders"';⁴ with a mind as wide as the world, and a sympathy which reached out to places and men, previously taken for granted as beyond

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 7.

2. Ibid, p. 346.

3. In the early days of their political life Pitt and Wilberforce were "exactly like brothers".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 158.

Each lived at the other's house as casually as at his own.

4. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 194.

the pale where humanity might apply - with all these gifts and graces of character, Wilberforce seemed providentially prepared for the task and the time. It was to Wilberforce that Sharp and Clarkson looked when they needed a leader for their cause; it was to Wilberforce that Stephen turned when he came back from the West Indies; it was to Wilberforce that Grant looked to find a champion for his mission schemes. Without Wilberforce all the other men would have made some little rivulets in some section of their times; but without Wilberforce the rivulets would never have been gathered into one mighty stream, and controlled for so many memorable enterprises.¹

To strengthen the ties of common interests the Clapham Sect had many subsidiary ties of blood and kinship, some already suggested. Thornton was Wilberforce's cousin;² Gisborne married Babington's sister;³ Babington married Macaulay's sister;⁴ Charles Elliott married John Venn's sister;⁵ Stephen married Wilberforce's sister;⁶ and, all the available sisters having been taken, Macaulay married a -----

1. "Could any moral chemist have compounded an extract of humanity selecting all its choicest and most useful elements, he could not have prepared a being so admirably adapted for the peculiar service he was to render as Wilberforce".

George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 78.

2. See Supra, p.17
3. See Supra, p.21
4. See Supra, p.15
5. John Venn: Life of Henry Venn, p. 55.
6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 367. "In addition to all this the Babingtons, it is suggested, did some gentle planning so that Thornton married a close friend of their family. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 85 & 108.

pupil of Hannah More.¹ Soon too the next generation added its ties, and the son of James Stephen married the daughter of John Venn.²

Even beyond the limits of family, however, the group of Clapham friends gradually became knit together in an astonishing intimacy and solidarity. They planned and laboured like a Committee that never was dissolved. At the Clapham mansions they congregated by common impulse in what they chose to call their 'Cabinet Councils', wherein they discussed the wrongs and injustices that were a reproach to their country, and the battles that would need to be fought to establish righteousness. And thereafter, in Parliament and out, they moved as one body, delegating to each man the work he could do the best, that their common principles might be maintained and their common purposes be realized. And in private intercourse they lived and acted almost as if they all belonged to an inner circle of one large family.. They dwelt in one another's houses almost as a matter of course. Gisborne from Straffordshire, Babington from Leicester, and Simeon from Cambridge lived in the houses at Clapham, just as Wilberforce, Thornton and Macaulay lived at Yoxall Lodge and Rothley Temple, the homes of Gisborne and Babington. Yoxall Lodge, indeed was almost a second Clapham, and Wilberforce in 1803 wrote to Gisborne, "I longed to assist in the Cabinet councils which -----"

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 100-103.

2. Stephen: Life of Fitz-James Stephen, pp. 31-33.

must have been held at the lodge when Henry Thornton was with you".¹ Lady Knutsford does not exaggerate when she says,

"It was the custom of the circle...to consider every member of that coterie as forming part of a large united family, who should behave to each other with the same simplicity and absence of formality, which, in the usual way characterizes intercourse only among the nearest relatives. They were in the habit of either assembling at the same watering places during what may ironically be called their holidays, or else spending them at one another's houses, taking with them as a matter of course their wives and children".²

They even invited any one they pleased, knowing that whoever would be acceptable to one would be acceptable to all. Then when the holidays were over they assembled as frequently as possible to breakfast at each other's houses, or to discuss plans far into the night. And even when the rush of their busy campaigns kept them in the city during the week they regularly retired to Clapham for the week-end to enjoy the quiet in their exclusive circle, and to listen to the earnest sermons of John Venn,

1. Correspondence of William Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 253.

2. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 271. e.g. in 1809 Wilberforce casually tells of "halting for five or six days with Henry Thornton, where I carried Mrs. Wilberforce and my six children to the same house in which were contained his wife and eight".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 419.

Their houses, in fact were as near as may be to common property. Thornton died in Wilberforce's house, and Wilberforce's daughter died in Stephen's house.

See also Household of Faith, pp. 225-226; Stephen: The Clapham Sect, in Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography; and the Life of Wilberforce, passim; and also the pleasant picture of the Clapham families, quoted from Colquhoun in Appendix Two.

or occasionally to an inspired oration from Gisborne.¹

"It was a remarkable fraternity", says Coupland, "remarkable above all else, perhaps, in its closeness, its affinity. It not only lived for the most part in one little village; it had one character, one mind, one way of life....."

It was doubtless this homogeneity, this unanimity, that gave the group its power in public life. They might differ on party issues; but on any question of religion or philanthropy the voice of the "Saints", in Parliament or in the press, was as the voice of one man. It was, indeed, a unique phenomenon - this brotherhood of Christian politicians. There has never been anything like it since in British public life".²

Yet remarkable as this 'brotherhood of Christian politicians', this group of 'Saints'³ might be, they were,

1. In his famous essay on "The Clapham Sect" in the Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography the younger Stephen gave his opinion that Gisborne was one of the supreme orators in the history of the English pulpit.
2. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 251.
3. In their lifetime of course the group were not known as the "Clapham Sect". They were in fact not popularly known by that name until after the publication of Stephen's essay by that title. But in their lifetime they were derisively known as the "Saints", and commonly so called.

See Memoirs of Buxton, pp. 120-121.

Greville Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp. 125, 371, 278.

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 381.

Parliamentary Debates, 2nd Series, ix 255, ff.,

New Series, x 1157, xi, 1167 & 1234.

London Times May 16, 1833.

John Bull Nov. 10, 1823, p. 356 (A virulent article on Macaulay, "Saint Zachariah").

Christian Observer, 1813, p. 617, 1839, p. 798 etc.

The "Saints" of course were the whole of Wilberforce's following of whom the Clapham Sect were the dynamic nucleus. In a general way the term "Saint" became associated with the characteristic enterprises of the Sect. Cf. the significant outburst of Jeremy Bentham, "If to be an anti-slavist is to be a saint, saintship for me. I am a saint".

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 510.

as will soon be seen, a very tiny company to stem the current of their times, and to wage the battles that waited before them.

Chapter Two

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SLAVE TRADE

The greatest labours of the Clapham Sect centre about anti-slavery campaigns. The first movement was for the abolition of the slave trade¹, an enterprise of which the stupendous difficulty is understood only by knowing how powerful and how deeply entrenched were the vested interests which "the Trade"² at that time represented. In the latter years of the eighteenth century the slave trade was thought to be inseparably associated with the commerce and prosperity, and even the national security, of Great Britain. It had brought to British ports a prosperity they had never

1. i.e. the capturing of Negroes in Africa, and shipping them for sale to the West Indies. The English had entered this trade in 1562 when Sir John Hawkins took a cargo of slaves from Sierra Leone and sold them in St. Domingo. The English attitude however wavered for a while...In 1618 the Agent of the African Chartered Company declared that the Company would not buy "any that had our own shapes". But after the Restoration, Charles II gave a Charter to a Company - of which his brother James, later King of England, was a member - which was to take 3000 slaves a year to the West Indies. From that time the trade grew to enormous proportions. In 1770 out of a terrific total of 100,000 slaves a year, British ships alone transported more than half; and in 1787 when Wilberforce began his crusade that percentage was still maintained.

See Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. 1.
Early Chapters.

Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 68-74. Etc.

2. Just as in England "the Trade" now means the Liquor Trade, so then it meant the Slave Trade.

before known;¹ it had returned fabulous profits to ship owners and slave traders; it had built up an immense plantation system in the West Indies; and it had provided, so the nation believed, admirable training for British seamen, and an essential recruiting ground for the British navy. It alone, according to general conviction, made possible the prosperity and even the solvency of the herring and Newfoundland fisheries, 'those great nurseries of seamen',² and the sugar refining, and ship-building, and other associated industries.³ The slave trade, in fact, was regarded as peculiarly suited to the necessities of Great Britain. It had been pronounced by statute as 'very advantageous to the nation';⁴

1. After the American war the port of Liverpool was making £300,000 a year from the Slave Trade.

P.A.Brown: The French Revolution in English History, p. 4.

"Beyond a doubt it was the slave trade which raised Liverpool from a struggling port to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres of the world". Ramsay Muir: History of Liverpool, p. 195.

2. Bryan Edwards, Speech, delivered in Jamaica Nov. 19th, 1789.

3. In 1791 Colonel Tarleton declared in the House of Commons that, "Abolition would instantly annihilate a trade which annually employed upwards of 5,500 sailors, upwards of 160 ships, and whose exports amounted to 80,000£ sterling; and would undoubtedly bring the West India trade to decay, whose exports and imports amount to upwards of 6,000,000£ sterling, and which give employment to upwards of 160,000 tons of additional shipping and sailors in proportion.

Parliamentary History xxix 281.

In 1799 the Duke of Clarence said in the House of Lords that "in 1798 the British West India capital amounted to seventy millions sterling; employing 689 vessels, 148,176 tons navigated by 14,000 seamen..the gross duties to the British Empire 1,800,000£"...In 1799 the British capital in the West Indies was said to equal 100 millions sterling.

Parliamentary History xxxiv 1105.

4. W.R.Inge: England, p. 110.

it had been patronized by Royalty;¹ it had been welcomed by the nation as the most coveted reward of successful warfare;² it had been legalized by Charters in 1631, 1633, and 1672; by Act of Parliament in 1698; and by Treaty in 1713, 1725, and 1748;³ and, even more significantly, it had flung its far-reaching tentacles around the interests and ambitions of multitudes of ordinary folk.

"'Almost every order of people', says a Liverpool writer in 1795, 'is interested in a Guinea cargo!....It is well known that many of the small vessels that import about an hundred slaves are fitted out by attorneys, drapers, ropers, grocers, tallow-chandlers, barbers, tailors, etc.,...Some have one eighth, some a fifteenth, some a thirty-second share'".⁴

The proposal to abolish a trade on which such a wide share of Britain's good fortune seemed directly or indirectly dependent appeared to people of the latter part of the eighteenth century to be prompted by nothing but the wildest and most impracticable idealism. The slave trade had not then become necessarily associated with moral obloquy. As late as 1789 Lord Penhryn in the House of Lords indignantly maintained that a man might pursue the

1. See Supra note 1, p.37. After the Jacobin scare George III and George IV became strongly opposed to the Abolitionists.
2. In 1713, the Assiento of the Treaty of Utrecht which secured for Britain the right to furnish 4800 slaves yearly to America, was hailed as a national triumph.
3. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 6, p. 472.
4. Ramsay Muir: History of Liverpool, p. 194.

business without even an 'imputation of inhumanity'.¹

And people more sensitive to possible obligations of humanity yet reconciled themselves to the unfortunate features of the trade, on the ground of its sheer economic necessity. The London publicist expressed no solitary opinion when he wrote,

"The impossibility of doing without slaves in the West Indies will always prevent this traffic being dropped. The necessity, the absolute necessity, then, of carrying it on, must, since there is no other, be its excuse".²

And though John Wesley might hurl back the ringing reply, "I deny that villainy is ever necessary",³ there were few of Wesley's spirit.

Naturally however the trade had not been prosecuted

1. Parliamentary History: xxvii, 582. In 1783 when Granville Sharp took up the case of the Zong, the vessel from which 130 sickly slaves had been thrown overboard so that the owner might profit by the insurance, the Solicitor-General reprobated the 'pretended appeals' to 'humanity', and asserted that the slaves were property, and that the master therefore had an unquestioned right to throw overboard as many as he wished without "a SHEW OR SUGGESTION OF CRUELTY, or a SURMISE OF IMPROPRIETY".

Prince Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, pp. 239-245.

The whole trial demonstrated that after the murder of 130 men the only question with which an English court could be concerned was the "precise distribution of costs and losses".

Hammond: Charles James Fox, p. 234.

2. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 75.
In 1791 Mr. Grosvenor in the House of Commons said that the slave trade "was not an amiable trade - but neither was the trade of a butcher an amiable trade, and yet a mutton chop is a good thing".

Parliamentary History xxix, 281.

In 1807 Mr. Anthony Brown said in the House of Commons that the slave trade was an evil "interwoven with the most important interests of the country".

Parliamentary Debates, viii, 1046.

3. John Wesley: Thoughts About Slavery, p. 35.

without protest.¹ George Fox had raised his voice against it in 1671, and Baxter in 1680. The Quakers had shown in 1772 that in England at least there was no basis in law for any slavery. John Wesley in 1774 had written his powerful and effective "Thoughts upon Slavery".² The Methodist Conference in 1780 had compelled all their overseas ministers to free their slaves.³ And Bishop Porteus in 1783 had preached against slavery before the Society for the Propagation of the gospel.⁴

Literature too had its humanitarian tradition.⁵ James Thomson, Defoe, Pope, Adam Smith, William Godwin, Mrs. Aphra Behn, Savage, Paley, and Samuel Johnson - all had either directly or indirectly been advocates for the unhappy Negro. And in 1776 Hartley, son of the metaphysician, had introduced into parliament the first motion against slavery.⁶

All these did necessary work in cultivating the humanitarian sentiment in which the later movements were to find some starting ground. But they had no sensible effect upon the triumphant progress of the trade itself. They raised, as -----

1. For fuller details than the following see Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. 1, pp. 44-109.

2. "It was one of the most effective pieces of anti-slavery literature produced".

Warner: The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution, p. 241.

3. Ibid, p. 245.

4. The Society however caught little of the Bishop's spirit. In the next year it decided even to forbid Christian instruction to slaves.

Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 36.

5. For a survey see Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Chapter Three and Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, Chapter Two.

6. Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 396.

Wilberforce was later to raise, the considerations of religion and humanity. But not even humanity, much less religion, was then supposed to invade the spheres of commerce and national necessity. "Humanity", exclaimed the Earl of Abdington in reply to Wilberforce, "Humanity is a private feeling, and not a public principle to act upon".¹

In short, it was generally agreed that, whatever incidental evils might be associated with it, the slave trade itself was an inevitable part of the economic order, and far too powerful to be overthrown by considerations of abstract principle. Edmund Burke had been afraid to make it an issue lest it should ruin his party.² Pitt too with all his early enthusiasm could not venture to make it a party question. Even John Wesley at first did not imagine that it could be officially outlawed: his "Thoughts upon Slavery" advocate only individual action. To the hard temper of the Eighteenth century the appeals of justice and mercy, and the 'enthusiastic' preaching about the worth of souls, seemed pitiably weak to counter the material advantages which the Trade returned to its titanic interests.

"The sacrifice of Africa was still a 'necessity' for Europeans across the Atlantic. The Trade, indeed, could never satisfy the planters' needs. Conditions of slave life on the plantations were not conducive to any large natural increase in the stock. Always more imported slaves were wanted, and some day more islands might be British, more land available for cultivation. There seemed no reason why the Trade should ever come to an end."³

1. Parliamentary History xxx, 657.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 152.
3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 84.

'Necessity' indeed was presumed to confront every humanitarian objection with an invincible gesture, and while individual protests rose and died away 'the Trade' stalked remorselessly on 'with a step steady as time and an appetite keen as death'.¹

OPENING MOVES OF THE CAMPAIGN

Such was the position of the Slave Trade, and such the mind of England, when, in 1787, William Wilberforce calmly wrote in his diary, "God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners".² Yet, incredibly enough, never did warrior enter the lists more confidently than Wilberforce. He was indeed strangely optimistic, and unaware of the real power of the interests he opposed. He thought that he could detect in the Commons 'a universal disposition'³ in his favour, and early in his campaign he wrote with confident italics, "On the whole ...there is no doubt of the success."⁴

That early optimism soon suffered rude jolts. When,

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 231.

2. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 149.

3. & 4. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 100.

Wilberforce was optimistic even about a plan to persuade France to agree jointly with England to abolish the Trade. He wrote to Sir William Eden, British ambassador in Paris, about negotiations. But Eden was more worldly wise, and replied that he was not sanguine, "as to the success of any proposition, however just and right, which must militate against a large host of private interests."

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 157.

during Wilberforce's illness in 1788¹, Pitt had moved the first resolution to consider the slave trade the 'West Indians'² had remained complacently silent. But their real character was soon revealed. The charges against the slave trade had induced some Members of Parliament to inspect a slave ship, lying in harbour.³ The sight of the slave quarters, and the apprehension of the unspeakable miseries which the tightly packed slaves must endure in the 'Middle Passage',⁴ led Sir William Dolben, one of the party and a close friend of Wilberforce, to introduce into parliament a Bill to regulate the number of slaves that could be transported in a given tonnage.⁵ This was not vague resolution but a definite though limited proposal; and the West Indians immediately stirred into action. They assured the Commons that the tales of the Middle Passage were begotten in fanaticism and nurtured in falsehood, and that the captive slave looked upon the voyage from Africa as 'the happiest period of his life'.⁶ But they made a tactical error. Their haughty assumption that the trade must not be subject to any legislation whatever was more than Pitt could stand. Indignantly, by sheer force of his personal influence, he forced the Bill

1. Wilberforce was extremely ill in 1788, so ill that he was not expected to live; and Pitt agreed to introduce the matter of the slave trade to parliament.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 167-171.

2. The agents and connections of the slave trade represented a powerful vested interest, and as the "West Indians" became as well known and almost as formidable a body in politics and society as the 'nabobs'.

Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 75-76.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 172.

4. The route of the slave ships from the Guinea Coast to the West Indies lay entirely within the tropical belt, and was consequently known as the Middle Passage.

5. Parliamentary History, xxvii, 573.

6. Ibid., xxvii, 592. Lord Penrhyn said that the proposed measure would "abolish the Trade". Ibid., xxvii, 589.

through both houses.¹

That unexpected defeat awakened the slave interests to the new danger, and created a storm of opposition to the abolitionists,² a storm which opened their eyes to the nature of the task they were undertaking.

Undaunted, however, Wilberforce, on recovering from his illness, continued to pursue his campaign, and on May 12th, of the next year, 1789, he introduced the slave question to Parliament in his first and most eloquent speech on the slave trade.³ But the West Indians had summoned the resources at their control, and, although Wilberforce was supported by Pitt, Fox, and Burke, even such giants could not prevail against the interests of commerce. The Commons determined on the expedient of delay⁴ - an expedient that was to find ample imitation in the years that followed.

WILBERFORCE BEGINS TO DRAFT HIS FOLLOWERS

In his defeat Wilberforce had learned one useful lesson. There was no body of informed opinion to which he could appeal, and no adequate source of reliable information. His campaign

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 111.
2. The campaign against the abolitionists did not stop short of the virulent. Wilberforce was assaulted on all grounds, political and moral. Gisborne wrote to him "I shall expect to read in the newspapers of your being carbonadoed by West Indian planters, barbecued by African merchants, and eaten by Guinea captains; but do not be daunted, for - I will write your epitaph". Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 218.
3. Parliamentary History, xxviii, 41-67.
4. Ibid, xxviii, 101.

would not prosper as long as men could talk about the Middle Passage as providing the 'happiest period of a slave's life'. The first condition of success was wider knowledge. And it was in his search for knowledge that Wilberforce gathered about him his 'Clapham Sect'.

Clarkson had been invaluable from the beginning, both for gathering evidence and for writing letters and pamphlets and spreading information.¹ But Wilberforce needed still other labourers. He had already called in William Smith to help in watching the inquiries which the Privy Council and the House of Commons had instituted into the conduct of the slave trade. Together with Smith he had hovered around 'watching and assisting his witnesses'.² until he had been almost exhausted by the labour.³ And when the inquiries were ended there were hundreds of pages of evidence to be read and analyzed, and sifted for future use. With the multitudinous other calls upon his time Wilberforce alone was helpless. So he began to call on the enthusiasms of his friends.

In October, 1790, he joined with Babington and went to Gisborne's house, Yoxall Lodge,⁴ where the two remained

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 154 & 184.
Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 1, p. 289 et seq.
2. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 138.
3. "I am almost worn out, and I pant for a little country air, and quiet."
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 271.
4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 280-282.

for a month working together in retirement nine hours a day, reading and abridging evidence.¹ In November he was called back to London to enter again into the old political life and bustle.² But early in the spring he retired again, this time to the 'rural fastness' of Thornton's house at Clapham where he resumed his work on the evidence³ while he summoned Babington again to assist in the work.⁴ Soon however he turned aside to prepare his approaching speech in the House of Commons, which was delivered in 1791,⁵ and bore witness to the long labours of investigation. It was, says Coupland, 'the clearest, most circumstantial, and yet most succinct account, given then or since, of the case against the Slave Trade'.⁶ But once more though Wilberforce had the support of the giants, the pigmies, with their purchased votes were too many.⁷ 'Commerce chinked its purse',⁸ and after a two days' battle Wilberforce was defeated.⁹

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 283.

2. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 284.

3. He even continued his work through Sunday. "Spent Sunday as a working day - did not go to church - Slave Trade" is an unusual entry in his biography.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 290.

4. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 289. "Without shame or remorse I call on you to assist us in epitomizing the evidence.... You may be allowed a little... discretion... but you must be very reserved in the exercise of it... In about a month I conceive I shall make my motion. Let me know how your engagements stand that I may contrive to avail myself of your help whether in town or country." Thus Wilberforce summoned Babington again to work.

5. Parliamentary History, xxix, 250-278.

6. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 141.

7. Drake, an anti-abolitionist, said in the House of Commons that, "the leaders, it was true, were for abolition, but the minor orators, the dwarfs, the pigmies, would, he trusted, carry the question against them".

Parliamentary History, xxix, 358.

8. Letters of Horace Walpole, xiv, 418.

9. Parliamentary History, xxix, 359.

THE APPEAL FROM PARLIAMENT TO THE PEOPLE

With that defeat Wilberforce and his workers began a new phase of their labour. Their first aim had been to convince parliament, and, by dint of their combined labour, they had drawn from authentic evidence a damning picture of the slave trade. But they were painfully aware that parliament had been little moved by their laborious attempt. Their efforts had recoiled helplessly against the 'multitude of silent votes',¹ subservient to vested interests. They were being gradually convinced that their only hope lay in an appeal from the parliament to the people, an appeal that would be viewed with little favour in eighteenth century England. At first Wilberforce had been suspicious of such tactics. He approved of promoting petitions to parliament, and had encouraged Clarkson in that work. He also had kept his house in Palace Yard open to friends of abolition,² and neglected no means of winning persons of distinction.³ But

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 299. Once after General Tarleton had defended the interests of the slave owners in Parliament he pointed to some of his Liverpool constituents in the gallery and exclaimed, "There are my masters".

Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 147.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 222.

3. Even before this time unusual methods of propaganda had been adopted by the abolitionists. One of Cowper's poems, THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT, had been printed on expensive paper and circulated by the thousand in fashionable circles, and afterwards set to music and sung everywhere as a popular ballad. One of Wilberforce's friends had suggested the employment of Gibbon as an anti-slavery propagandist, observing that "a fee would be a sufficient motive". This expedient however seems not to have been tried. Wedgwood, the celebrated potter, contributed another popular device. He made a cameo showing, on a white background, a Negro

(continued)

he 'distrusted and disowned the questionable strength that might be gained by systematic agitation'.¹ He was to be taught by his cause. He found that his hopes lay only in the people; and in a short time he and his friends became the most persistent agitators in all Britain. "It is on the general impression and feeling of the nation we must rely," Wilberforce confesses to Gisborne, early in 1792, "So let the flame be fanned".²

The flame was fanned accordingly. Clarkson set out on another tour of the country, stirring up petitions, and leaving in his wake a trail of Corresponding Societies.³ Pamphlets were circulated widespread, public meetings were arranged,⁴ and the more enthusiastic campaigners commenced

1. This was in 1788. Wilberforce then did not favour the use either of Corresponding Societies or of public meetings.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 183.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1. p. 334.
3. Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 351-352.
4. Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, p. 353. "Great pains were taken by interested persons in many places to prevent public meetings. But no efforts could avail. The current ran with such strength and rapidity, that it was impossible to stem it". It is difficult to think that public meetings in themselves could be opposed as radical, but they were. Cf. Wilberforce's characteristic comment in 1792, "Consult topic 'Aristocratism', and you will find that all great men hate public meetings".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 336.

in his native colour, kneeling for supplication while he utters the plea to become so famous, "Am I not a man and a brother?" This cameo became the rage all over England, and was copied on snuff boxes, and ornamental hair pins.

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 188-191.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1. p. 223.

Last summer (1933) the writer saw several of these cameos in the ceramics section of the British Museum.

a boycott of slave-grown sugar. Babington and William Smith were strongly in favour of the boycott, and themselves maintained it strictly; though others, including Wilberforce and Gisborne, were doubtful of such a policy.¹

All these devices, however, created for the Abolitionists publicity which they were now determined to exploit to the full.

"The best course", Wilberforce had written, "will be to...excite the flame as much as possible in a secret way, but not to allow it more than to smoulder until after I shall have given notice of my intention of bringing the subject forward.² This must be the signal for the fire's bursting forth".²

Like well oiled machinery the organization was set in readiness, and when Wilberforce gave the signal it was set in motion. As by magic petitions multiplied all over Britain; and with admirable timeliness on the day on which Wilberforce rose to make his speech (April 2nd, 1792)³ there was laid on the table of the House of Commons the last of five hundred and nineteen petitions for the total abolition of the slave trade:⁴

"Never before", says Coupland, "had the politically passive, quiescent, oligarchic Britain of the eighteenth century witnessed such a lively and widespread movement. It had shown how much could be done to mobilize public opinion outside the walls of Parliament, yet strictly within

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 338-339. The boycott however spread widely. Clarkson said that there was no town through which he passed in which some person had not left off the use of sugar. He estimated that there were 300,000 people who had abandoned the use of sugar.

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 349-350.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 333-334.

3. Parliamentary History, xxix, 1055.

4. Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. 2, p. 355.

the liberties of the constitution. It was a new and a great fact in British politics".¹

THE REACTION FROM JACOBINISM

A new and formidable obstacle was soon created. The French Revolution had begun to arouse in the ruling classes of England a reaction of terror. Moreover in the French Colony of St. Domingo the Negroes had broken out in a terrible revolt.² In English minds the talk of freedom for slaves seemed too closely associated with the Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, hoarsely shouted in the streets of Paris. The aristocratic House of Commons had no liking whatever for the public meetings, the Corresponding Societies, and the petitions of the preceding weeks. They felt that all the talk about freedom and brotherhood was a dangerous business; and they were determined to establish an effective barrier to the whole movement.

They were obliged however to change their method. The patient researches of Wilberforce and his 'white Negroes'³ had so effectively stripped the coverings from the iniquities of the slave trade that even its defenders could no longer deny the conditions. They chose a more subtle expedient. They now admitted that the trade itself was undesirable, and pleaded only that a too sudden prohibition would create a calamitous dislocation of business, and run

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 160.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 340-344.
3. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 255.



counter to 'the sacred attention that Parliament had ever shown to the interests of individuals'.¹ So in 1792 when Wilberforce re-introduced his measure in Parliament he found himself met not by opposition to his aim, but by a plea against the perils of a too hasty move towards it. And, though Fox again brought his lurid eloquence to the battle; though Pitt, at six in the morning, concluded the debate with the greatest speech of his career; once more the power of the silent prevailed, and the House voted that Wilberforce's motion should be qualified by the word gradually. Knowing full well the possibilities of that word they then voted cheerfully for abolition.²

Here was another defeat for Wilberforce. Yet the defeat was not absolute. To Gisborne and Babington, watching their master from the gallery,³ it seemed somewhat like success. For the first time a motion for abolition had actually been carried in the House of Commons; and the defenders of the trade, formerly so confident, had been 'plainly overawed and ashamed'.⁴ Moreover something was retrieved from the defeat. For when the question was again discussed on April 23 and 27 the date of Abolition was changed from 1800 to 1796 - only four years ahead.⁵ "On the whole", wrote Wilberforce,

1. Parliamentary History, xxix, 1105.

2. Ibid, xxix, 1158.

3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 21.

4. So wrote Isaac Milner to Wilberforce.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 347.

5. Parliamentary History, xxix, 1293.

"matters have turned out better than I expected".¹

The first success was not to be continued. Unfortunately for Wilberforce's brotherhood, at the very time they had determined to pit the strength of the people against the power of the vested interests in parliament, the people themselves succumbed to the fear which had first manifested itself in the upper classes. After the horror of the 'September Massacres' in 1792 the dread of revolution spread even to liberal sections of English opinion, and there again expressed itself in immediate and unreasoning fear of all reform.² The agitation of 1792 could not be maintained in 1793. Wilberforce reported that a 'damp and odium' had fallen on the idea of 'collective applications'.³ The voice of England, which had spoken so strongly a few months before was now strangely silent - and where it was not silent it was often tinged with a suspicious accent. "I do not imagine", wrote a correspondent from Yorkshire, "that we could meet with twenty persons in Hull at present who would sign a petition, that are not republicans."⁴ It seemed, indeed, that many of the enthusiasts for abolition were people of Jacobinical tendencies. At any rate the abolitionists had shown a disturbing insensibility to the sacredness of

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 347.

2. See P.A. Brown: The French Revolution in English History, pp. 89-93.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 19.

4. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 18.

property; and they had been audaciously endeavouring to repudiate the considered decisions of Parliament - and, encouragement of such a temper was exceedingly dangerous. The eager whisper of the Trade magnified the suggestion. The Revolution, in fact, had furnished the Trade with just the weapon it needed. As after the world war any movement could be discredited by calling it Bolshevistic, so at that time any movement could be discredited by calling it Jacobinical. Under the taint of that label the abolition movement lost caste. In 1793 the Commons were not defying public opinion when they rejected Wilberforce's motion.¹ And the Lords were merely capitalizing the current temper when they made a savage attack on the whole question of Abolition, as a subversive manifestation of republican principles.

"What does the abolition of the slave trade mean?" asked the Earl of Abington fiercely, "more or less in effect than liberty and equality? what more or less than the rights of man? and what is liberty; and what the right of man, but the foolish fundamental principles of the new philosophy?"²

The cloud of Republicanism had settled upon the Clapham Sect, and, though they did not know it, many long years were to elapse before they would be able to move from out its shadow.

THE SIERRA LEONE EXPERIMENT

Meanwhile far away from Paris and Westminster the

1. Parliamentary History, xxx, 520.

2. Ibid, xxx, 654.

Clapham Sect were engaged in another enterprise closely linked with their abolition labours.

The results of Granville Sharp's Victory in freeing the slaves in England were not all anticipated. About 20,000 slaves were freed, and many of them, seeking a livelihood in the cities, were soon reduced to utter poverty. The streets of London began to swarm with black beggars, and about four hundred appealed personally to Sharp for assistance.¹ In 1786 a Committee for Relieving the Black Poor was formed to look after some of these unfortunates. During that year a Dr. Smeathman, who had spent some time in Sierra Leone conceived the idea of establishing a colony of these Negroes in that place. The idea appealed to the Abolitionists because it offered a means of demonstrating how Africa could develop under civilization and Christianity, and to the Government because it provided an unexpected means of getting rid of an awkward problem.. Government aid was therefore given to the project, and in the next spring Sharp despatched a contingent of four hundred Negroes to establish a colony on the coasts of Sierra Leone.

All the ills that naturally beset a new colony were aggravated by the dissolute nature of the colonists, and the unfortunate blunders of the promoters. By the end of the first year nearly half the settlers had died, and the -----

1. Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 260. A full account of the Sierra Leone settlement and especially of Granville Sharp's connection with it, is given on pp. 257-379.

remaining half were saved from starvation only by a cargo of provisions sent out chiefly at Sharp's personal charge. Toward the end of the second year (1789), in revenge for the atrocities of British slave raiders, a native chief burned the settlement to the ground.

Even these reverses could not daunt the intrepid Sharp. He merely summoned his group of Clapham friends to recommence the work. In 1790 they formed the St. George's Bay¹ Association, which in the next year was incorporated as the Sierra Leone Company.² Of this Company, Sharp was President, and Henry Thornton Chairman; Wilberforce, Grant, Lord Teignmouth, and Babington, were among the Directors;³ and Simeon, Gisborne, and Charles Elliott among the interested members.⁴ Thereafter the brotherhood cherished this Company as one of their most important and significant projects; and gave to it much care and labour, and many anxious consultations in the oval room at Thornton's.⁵

1. St. George's Bay was the name given by the first expedition to the harbour of Sierra Leone.

Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 270.

2. Ibid, p. 275.

3. Correspondence of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 510. Hoare gives few details of this nature.

4. Charles Hole: The Early History of the C.M.S., p. 18.

5. Here are just a few entries from Wilberforce's diary: 1791, October, "17th, Monday. Grant dined with us at H. Thornton's, and we discussed Sierra Leone.

"18th. Meeting of Directors at H. Thornton's. Dined there together and sat evening till late."

"20th. Directors at H. Thornton's all morning...Returned to Meeting at Thornton's, where only excellent Granville Sharp."

December 15th. "At work on Sierra Leone business most of the day. Henry Thornton has been at it the whole day for some months." (Wilberforce was then with Gisborne at Yoxall Lodge, and Grant and Thornton had come for him unexpectedly

(continued)

Sharp, Wilberforce, and Grant especially gave their attention to it; but, most of all, Henry Thornton took it up as his specific responsibility.¹

Thus organized, the brotherhood made a valiant attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the unhappy colony. They sent out an expedition which gathered together the remaining sixty-four survivors,² and soon augmented them by over one thousand Negroes from Nova Scotia.³ But Sierra Leone was to be the land of historic misfortune. Catastrophe after catastrophe: ants and malaria, fire and insurrection, successively devastated the settlement. Irretrievable disaster was avoided only by the resources of the Clapham Sect itself.

1. Colquhoun wrote, "His (Thornton's) was the directing mind. He devised the plan; he formed the Company; he collected the capital; he arranged the constitution; he chose, equipped, and despatched the settlers; he selected and sent out the governor...In every difficulty the appeal was to him. He obtained grants of money from Parliament;when the colony passed on to the Crown, it was he who arranged the terms".

Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 286.

Leslie Stephen in his article on Henry Thornton in the D.N.B. supports the same view. Thornton himself wrote in 1791,

"The colony works me from morning till night; the importance of the thing strikes me, and fills my mind so much that, at present, business, politics, friendship, seem all suspended for the sake of it".

Henry Morris: Founders of...the Bible Society, p. 65.

2. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 20.

3. These Negroes had fought for the British in the American war, and in return had been set free in Nova Scotia, where they found the climate too rigorous, and begged to be transported to Africa. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 323.

(But there are large numbers of Negroes now living and thriving in Nova Scotia, the descendants of those who fled to Canada for freedom in the days of the 'Underground Railway'. E.M.H.)

to take him back to the city about the Sierra Leone business.
 "16th. Worked at Sierra Leone business preparing the Report.
 "17th. All this week at Sierra Leone business, and therefore staid in the city with H. Thornton....Grant with us always at Thornton's - chosen Director on Tuesday".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 316, 322, & 325.
Morris: Life of Grant, p. 179.

Zachary Macaulay had now returned from the West Indies, and, introduced by Babington, had favourably commended himself to the group.¹ In 1791 the perplexed Directors sent Macaulay to Sierra Leone on a tour of inspection,² and, after he had returned and communicated to them again in England, they sent him back as Second Member of the Council, and shortly afterwards made him, at the age of twenty-six, Governor of the Colony.³

Macaulay had to be not only Governor, but commercial agent, paymaster, judge, clerk, and even chaplain.⁴ He had to write long official reports to the Directors, and additional long private letters to Thornton.⁵ The overwork which was laid upon him injured his health; yet he held on, foiled an attempted insurrection, and disciplined the colony into respectable order. But in 1794 came the consummation of calamity. A roving squadron of French Jacobins, piloted by an angered American slave captain, attacked the town, plundered its inhabitants, burnt most of the Company's

1. Thornton especially seems to have been keeping his eye on the young man. Thornton and Babington seem to have planned for Macaulay to go to Sierra Leone, though Wilberforce too had been watching him. After his return from the tour of inspection in 1792 Wilberforce wrote to Babington, "I will by no means forget Macaulay. I think highly of his understanding; he appears to have a manly collected mind".

Correspondence of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 93,
Vol. 2, p. 510.

Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 11.
Christian Observer, 1839, p. 759.

2. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 20.

3. Ibid, pp. 22 & 59.

4. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 761.

5. Such was the intimacy between them that Wilberforce considered letters sent to Thornton as equally sent to himself.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 175.

property; and left the luckless colonists on the verge of starvation. Macaulay acted with extraordinary self-possession and intrepid courage, and succeeded in rallying the dismayed settlers to the work of reconstruction.¹ But the strain and the excessive labours injured his health, so that shortly afterwards he was compelled to return to England.²

Characteristically Macaulay turned even this necessity to good account. He had received from Wilberforce a letter asking for 'damning proof' of the evil character of the slave trade.³ He now decided, though at a risk which might well give pause even to the healthiest man, to secure his own proof at first hand. By some means he managed to arrange a passage to Barbadoes on a slave ship.⁴ Thence, furnished with information invaluable to the brotherhood, he found other passage to England, where, after such signal services, 'he was admitted at once and for ever within the innermost circle of friends and fellow labourers who were united round Wilberforce and Henry Thornton'.⁵

Macaulay remained in England nearly a year, living mainly with the Babingtons, though, of course, he made 'long

1. & 2. For an account of the raid see Knutsford; Zachary Macaulay, pp. 64-80 and Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, pp. 283-292.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 409.
4. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 86-90. Macaulay's account of the voyage is in the Christian Observer, 1804, p. 344.
5. G.O.Trevelyan, Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 20. Wilberforce and Thornton took early opportunity to introduce their protégé to that associate member of their "little confederacy" Mrs. Hannach More. On a visit to Mrs. More Macaulay fell in love with one of her pupils, Miss Selina Mills, to whom before the end of his furlough he was betrothed, and who, on his return from Africa, became his wife.
Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 92-115.

and frequent' visits with Wilberforce and Thornton, both at their London houses and at Thornton's famous villa in Clapham, where Wilberforce and Thornton were then living together.¹ Early in 1796 he returned again to his arduous labours in Sierra Leone, where, fortified by numerous letters of advice and criticism, but also of unvarying kindness, 'from the brotherhood at home,'² he carried on his task for three years longer. In 1799 he returned to England to assume the duties of Secretary to the Company, and to employ his invaluable experience in the West Indies and in Africa in a life-long labour against slavery.³

1. Knutsford; Zachary Macaulay, pp. 92.

2. Macaulay was the junior member of the 'Sect' and all the others felt constrained to give him their advice. He tells Miss Mills of a letter from Babington, and adds, "Nor was it the less acceptable for containing much faithful admonition and kind reproof".

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 170.

Again he mentions a letter from Henry Thornton, "In which were only eight lines", but which were yet long enough to give Macaulay "the satisfaction of knowing that he had nothing particularly to blame; a negative, but from Henry Thornton no mean praise".

G.W.E.Russell: Household of Faith, p. 226.

3. It is of sufficient importance to record that when Macaulay returned to England in 1799 he took with him 21 African boys, and 4 girls, with a view to their being educated and returned to Africa as Missionaries. The plan had been proposed and financed by Robert Haldane of Scotland, who intended to take the children to Edinburgh. But when Macaulay learned more fully of the religious and political views of Haldane "his conviction became irrevocable that under no circumstances should Mr. Haldane have any share in training the minds or influencing the fate of the children". Macaulay coolly proposed that Haldane should continue to meet the expense, and be allowed due weight in general direction of the scheme. But Haldane, not surprisingly, refused the gracious offer, and washed his hands of the whole affair. The friends at Clapham then formed the "African Education Society", which, largely financed by themselves, undertook the care and the cost of the children's education. Unfortunately the majority of

(continued)

Despite the series of reverses Macaulay had saved the colony from impending disaster and established it on a permanent basis.¹ After the French raid the chastened Negroes became more amenable to discipline. Before Macaulay left there were in Freetown, the main settlement, three hundred houses, and twelve hundred inhabitants, who had attained a comfortable measure of prosperity.² Macaulay's experience, however, had shown the need of a different constitution, with more adequate provision for legislation, and the administration of justice. The Directors therefore made application for a Charter, and in 1800 transformed their little venture into the first of those chartered companies that were in the next century to play such a significant part in the development of Africa.³ In 1808 they took a still further step: Henry Thornton arranged the transfer of Sierra Leone to the

1. Financially the Sierra Leone Company was not a success. Thornton himself lost 2000- 3000 on the venture, but from what he saw accomplished felt that he was "on the whole a gainer". The Company was indeed formed with "No expectation of mercantile advantage". It was "really a great Missionary Society".

D.N.B. Art. Henry Thornton.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 305.

Hole: History of the Church Missionary Society, p.17.

2. Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 296.

3. Ibid, pp. 297-298.
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the children succumbed to the English climate; but with the survivors, "some good was accomplished. They carried out to Africa many of the arts of civilized life. Whilst at Clapham they convinced Mr. Pitt that the African race is not naturally inferior to the European".

Haldane and Macaulay, it deserves to be said, worked cordially together in later years.

Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 296.

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 224.

For a discussion of the Haldane controversy see

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 201 & pp. 223-225.

Haldane: Memoirs of Robert Haldane, pp. 249-253.

Crown, and made it the first Crown Colony in Africa.¹

When the colony passed from the immediate control of Clapham it did not however cease to be of service. It remained an important base for missionary enterprise. Later when the slave trade was made illegal it became the home for rescued victims of pirate slavers.² And in 1821 it became the headquarters of the British Colonial government along the West coast of Africa, 'a government which was one day to prove the first and most powerful and most persistent instrument for the suppression of the Slave Trade throughout the dark interior of Africa'.³

But even in the earlier days something had been achieved. In spite of all the calamities the Clapham Sect could with some justification boast that their project had 'displayed the superior advantages of English law and English justice on a shore where England had been only known for crimes and named for execration'.⁴

THE LEAN YEARS

Sierra Leone had not diverted the Clapham Sect from their old campaign for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

1. Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, pp. 308-309.
2. By 1825 Sierra Leone had received nearly 18,000 liberated slaves. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 279.
3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 279.
4. Hoare: Granville Sharp, p. 310. Ironically enough in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone (seven times larger than the colony) which came under British oversight but was not subject to British law "all efforts to bring about an abolition of slave-owning failed until 1928".
Lady Simon: Slavery, p. 61.

After 1793, indeed, anti-slavery labour became increasingly difficult and unpopular. The decade from 1794 to 1804 was a long period of accumulating defeat. Even the Abolition Committee languished, and after 1797 dissolved completely.¹ But year after year till 1800 in persistent defiance of its unvarying defeat Wilberforce introduced into parliament his annual motion for Abolition. He knew that men disliked it, but he would not allow them to forget it. Through all the lean years, in ill report far more than good, he and his faithful company fought doggedly for their goal, often flatly defeated, but occasionally gaining some small ground.

In 1794 Wilberforce managed to carry in the Commons a Bill to abolish the supplying of slaves to foreign nations.² But the House of Lords where Abington warned the Bishops that the Bill contained seeds of 'other abolitions', and suggested that they might look to their own downfall, threw out the Bill with only four votes in its favour.³ In 1795 Wilberforce's pacifism⁴ brought him into general disfavour,

1. The Abolition Committee held only two meetings a year for 1795, 1796, 1797, and after that no meetings at all until it was re-organized in 1804.

Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 71.

2. Parliamentary History, xxx, 1149.

3. Parliamentary History, xxxi, 468.

4. Wilberforce was a convinced pacifist, though at certain times he was driven to believe that war was unavoidable. His attitude was in accord with that of the Sect generally. Cf. his diary 1794, December:
"19th...Strongly at present disposed to peace. Talked much politics with Gisborne who quite agrees with me".
And again on the same subject
"Dec. 26th. Much political talk with Grant and H. Thornton, making up my mind".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 64 & 68.

Wilberforce at length made up his mind to contend for peace, and so not only caused the first serious breach

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and when he reminded the House that by its 1792 decision¹ it had declared for abolition by the coming New Year, the House coolly cast out his motion.² His triumph in the County of York, however, won him new favour,³ and when he introduced his Bill in 1796 he was unexpectedly given a majority.⁴ "Surprise and Joy", he reported, "in carrying my question".⁵ But the triumph was shortlived. The Bill was thrown out on its third reading.⁶

1797 was a dark year in British history, 'the darkest and most desperate that any British minister has ever had to face.'⁷ Under the strain Pitt lost his old interest in abolition, although in personal loyalty he 'stood stiffly'⁸

1. See *Supra*, p. 52.

2. *Parliamentary History*, xxxii, 763. "Shameful", was Wilberforce's comment. And he added that the "infamous vote" had furnished him with another argument for parliamentary reform.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 84.

3. *Life of Wilberforce*, Vol. 2, pp. 123-133.

4. *Parliamentary History*, xxxii, 763.

5. *Life of Wilberforce*, Vol. 2, p. 140. Zachary Macaulay was then at Portsmouth en route to Africa, and heard the joyful tidings. "I scarcely ever felt purer pleasure" he wrote, "than on seeing Mr. Wilberforce's success in yesterday's paper".

Knutsford: *Zachary Macaulay*, pp. 113, 114.

6. Wilberforce was especially annoyed because enough of his supporters to have carried the reading were attending a popular opera. *Life of Wilberforce*, Vol. 2, p. 141-142.

7. Rosebery; Pitt, p. 133.

8. *Life of Wilberforce*, Vol. 2, p. 196.

between himself and Pitt, but incurred general disfavour. The king deliberately cut him at a levee, and others acted not less openly. But Wilberforce was not to be intimidated. Indeed he even seems to have thought of frustrating the government by the typical Clapham method of an appeal to the country, "If I thought that the bulk of the middle class throughout the nation was against...war, the effect of their interference in stopping it might more than compensate for the great evil of exciting a spirit of discontent. But it is not so yet". *Life of Wilberforce*, Vol. 2, pp. 64-80.

by Wilberforce in a losing battle in the Commons. But Wilberforce could never more put quite the same faith in his friend, and others not so understanding openly accused him of defection from the cause.¹

The next year proved somewhat better for the patient campaigners. Stephen's local knowledge and his zeal prevented an adroit victory of the West Indians.² And in 1799 the Sect carried through quite a succession of skirmishes. In March Wilberforce brought forward his usual motion for -----

1. "Mr. Pitt, unhappily for himself his country and mankind", said Stephen, "is not zealous enough in the cause of the Negroes to content for them as zealously as he ought, in the Cabinet any more than in parliament".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 225.

Perhaps the serious breach between Pitt and Wilberforce on Wilberforce's peace policy had its effect on Pitt's attitude to Wilberforce's cause. It must also be remembered that in 1797 occurred the death of Edward Eliot of Clapham, brother-in-law of Pitt, intimate friend of Wilberforce, and a link between the two - in Wilberforce's words "a bond of connexion which was sure never to fail".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 234-238.

2. Trinidad had been taken by the British, and the Carib tribes transferred from St. Vincent to the mainland. The Abolitionists were anxious that the new lands should not be stocked with added cargoes of slaves from Africa. But the West Indians persuaded Pitt to allow slaves already in the old colonies to be transferred to the new - which, Stephen knew, would mean only that Slaves would be taken from Africa to replace those transferred. Stephen was furious. "Lloyd's Coffee House", he wrote to Wilberforce, "is in a roar of merriment, at the dexterous compromise". Urged by Stephen, Wilberforce privately persuaded Pitt to abandon the measure. But because he made no public protest Stephen thought that he was too carefully tempering his zeal with consideration for political friends, wrote a sharp letter of protest, "I still clearly think", said the letter to Wilberforce, "that you have been improperly silent. ..You are..bound to do so, because those high priests of Moloch..are your political, and Mr. Pitt also your private friend". Wilberforce's reply was 'angelic'. "Go on, my dear sir, and welcome. Believe me, I wish not to abate anything of the force or frankness of your frankness..I feel myself obliged..Openness is the only foundation and preservative of friendship".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 260 & 265.

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 218.

abolition, and met his usual defeat.¹ But there was more to follow. William Smith carried a Bill for further regulation of the Middle Passage.² And then the indefatigable company proceeded with their most hopeful venture.

The Sierra Leone settlement had been continually disturbed by the activities of the slave-traders. To relieve their little colony and at the same time to make some small advance toward their ultimate goal Thornton and the others 'after long and careful consultation'³ concocted a sort of 'local option' measure for slavery, a measure to make the region around Sierra Leone a closed area to slave hunters. Thornton now brought forward this Slave Trade Limitation Bill, and, though disappointed by the coolness of Pitt,⁴ managed to pass the Bill through the House of Commons. The Lords however played their usual part. They first decided that they would need to gather evidence.⁵

Immediately all the brotherhood was in action. They watched the inquiry, prepared witnesses for examination at the bar, consulting incessantly with their legal council, of whom the chief was Stephen.⁶ In the midst of the excitement Macaulay arrived on his final return from Sierra Leone,⁷

1. Parliamentary History, xxxiv, 518-565.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 331.

3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 216.

4. Cf. Wilberforce's diary, "Pitt..coolly left misrepresentations without a word. William Smith's anger, Henry Thornton's coolness - deep impression on me, but conquered, I hope in a Christian way".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 331.

5. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 216.

6. Ibid, p. 216.

7. See Supra, p.60.

and, though he was proceeding to see his fiancée from whom he had been absent three years, he was immediately commandeered by Thornton and Wilberforce, and detained in London to give evidence before the Lords.¹ Macaulay's patience for once failed him, and he was constrained to remain only by the plea that his evidence might save the Bill. To add to his misery he was stricken by an attack of African fever, and had to prepare and deliver his evidence in ill health.² Finally the end came. The evidence was concluded and Stephen summed up for the Abolitionists.³ The friends were in high spirits. "We have", wrote Wilberforce, "the strongest probability of carrying the Slave Limitation Bill."⁴ Their hopes were rudely shattered. The inexorable Lords defeated the Bill on the second reading.⁵

Worse was to follow. In 1800 Wilberforce was adroitly inveigled into compromise, and did not renew in Parliament his annual motion on the slave trade. But he had been too optimistic and the compromise failed.⁶ Hence, after all the

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 218.
2. Ibid, p. 219 Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 339.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 339.
4. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 340.
5. Parliamentary History, xxxiv, 1139. Thurlow ridiculed the Sierra Leone Company, which would "send missionaries to preach in a barn in Sierra Leone to a set of Negroes who did not understand a single word of his language".
6. To placate the Abolitionists some of the West Indians said that they would be willing to agree to a suspension of the trade for a number of years. Wilberforce thought that it would be better to win a part than to lose the whole, and hence withheld his motion for abolition. But just as he hoped that the compromise was 'going on prosperously' the West Indians changed their minds. Wilberforce then tried to get the government to put through the measure in spite of the West Indians; but he could get no support.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 367-368.

steadfast labours, the last year of the century was the first since the commencement of the campaign in which the question of abolition was completely ignored by Parliament.

Yet Wilberforce's patient optimism did not falter. Despite the reverse he did not lose his confidence that he could see in the distance 'the streaks of light indicating the opening day'.¹

The dawn of the new century, however, was dark and forbidding. "What tempests rage around", said Wilberforce's Journal in January, 1801.² The war and the bad harvests had created widespread distress; and the Clapham Sect, in common with all philanthropists, were busy with schemes to alleviate the miseries of the poor.³ The motion for abolition having been deferred on the previous year it was now easy to follow the precedent, and Wilberforce decided that 'the state of affairs..rendered it prudent to forbear bringing forward the question in any form'.⁴ The next year the precedent was still easier to follow, and once again Parliament was untroubled with the old familiar motion of Wilberforce.⁵ In 1803 Wilberforce had resolved to take up

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 369.

2. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 1.

3. Wilberforce alone that year gave away £3000 more than his income. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 4.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 30.

5. Wilberforce would not have deferred his motion for so long had he not been occupied with larger hopes. The tidings of peace in October, 1801, had suggested to him "a grand Abolition plan". He revived his first dreams of a general convention of European powers which would reach a common agreement to abolish the trade. In his occupation with the larger plan he allowed the usual abolition motion to be passed over. He and his group did, however, forestall a move of Addington - the new Premier - to open to slavery the territories of Trinidad, so that the year was not without its victory. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p.26 et seq.

the matter again, when, as a letter to Babington reveals, he was taken seriously ill with influenza.¹ And while he was still confined at home there came the alarming threat of a French invasion. "You can conceive what would be said", he writes to Babington again, "if I were to propose Abolition now".² Very soon indeed the thought of Napoleon's army at Boulogne put aside completely for that year any possibility of further occupation with the slave trade.

THE LAST PHASE

More than ten years had now passed since the French Revolution had terminated so abruptly the initial hopes for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. And all the intervening time had been a weary record of valiant struggle and almost unvarying defeat. The long labours seemed to have gone for nothing and the end to be as far as ever from attainment. But the struggle had not been as fruitless as it seemed. Parliamentary Bills and Motions had been defeated; but Bills and Motions were not all the battle.

The Clapham Sect were now united. Sharp, Thornton, Wilberforce, Macaulay, Stephen, Lord Teignmouth, Grant, Gisborne, Smith, and Babington had all become accustomed to working together for common ends.³ No prime minister had such a cabinet as Wilberforce could summon to his assistance.

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 87; Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 258-259.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 88.

3. Following chapters will show some of the labours they had already performed.

Indeed since the old Abolition Committee had ceased this group of friends had constituted an unofficial Abolition Committee, which of its own enthusiasm had continued to meet and to labour during all the years.¹ In addition they had not only circulated in England a formidable quantity of abolitionist literature, but also had established their own magazine, the Christian Observer, which had gained a wide circulation, and which every month carried propaganda to an important section of the religious public. Moreover, five of the group - Wilberforce, Thornton, Babington, Smith and Grant - were now in Parliament,² and were beginning to distinguish themselves as the party of Independents, the 'Saints',

1. The Christian Observer, 1839, p. 758 et seq, in an article on Macaulay, says that the absence of the Abolition Committee in the years of reaction "was more than compensated by the very frequent meetings which were held at Mr. Wilberforce's house, in Old Palace Yard, at which were generally present Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Stephen, Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. Macaulay, Mr. William Smith, Lord Brougham, and others". It requires little difficulty to guess who some of the 'others' were. Moreover when the official Abolition Committee was re-assembled it was augmented by Lord Teignmouth, Stephen, Macaulay, and Robert Grant, son of Charles. As Gisborne had already been elected corresponding member, the Clapham Sect must have gone to the committee en masse.

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 341, 450, 490, 494.

Regardless of the formal Committee, however, the inner circle carried on its own discussions. Cf. Wilberforce's diary June 13, 1804, "Brougham, Stephen, Babington, Henry Thornton, Macaulay dining with us in Palace Yard most days of the Slave Trade debates".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 176.

2. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. i, xvi Alphabetical List of House of Commons.

and to exercise a moral influence out of all proportion to their numbers. And finally the Clapham Sect now had two adventitious advantages. In the first place the long used cry of Jacobinism had been done to death, and had lost its terror;¹ and in the second the Act of Union had passed, so that in the new parliament to which appeal must now be made there would be one hundred Irish members not bound up with the old interests which had given the Trade its hold on parliament.

Under these circumstances, so different from those of 1787, the Clapham Sect in 1804 girded themselves for the final struggle. Pitt had just been returned to office; and in the new parliament Wilberforce on the 30th of May presented - for the first time since 1799 - his bill for the Abolition of the Slave trade.² His speech, he thought, was awkward and stiff. But the temper of the house had changed, and the members, in larger numbers than had attended in the old days, heard him with gladness. There was also a dramatic intervention in his support. More than thirty of the Irish members, whose favour the abolitionists had taken care to cultivate, arranged a great dinner at which they drank success to the cause, and from which they marched to the House to vote in a body for Wilberforce.³ But even without these Wilberforce would have been safe; the division gave him a majority of 124-49.⁴

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 163. "Jacobinism happily was too discredited either to render to the Abolition her destructive aid, or supply a convenient reproach for its supporters". Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 168.

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 168.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 168 and Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 2, p. 475.

4. Life of Wilberforce Vol. 3, p. 168.

The Saints were intoxicated with their unaccustomed success. Stephen, Macaulay, Thornton, Grant, and William Smith, together with their new ally Brougham hurried over to Wilberforce's house to shower him with their congratulations, and to spend most of the night laying plans for further campaigns, and drafting the Bill that was to be.¹ That division had been different. Twice before the house had voted for abolition,² but with small houses and narrow majorities. Now the vote was large and the majority tremendous. "From that night the issue of the question was clear."³

The progress, however, was not rapid. The House of Commons did pass the second and third readings, though with diminished majorities, because the Irish had "been persuaded that it is an invasion of private property".⁴ But the Trade still had a bulwark in the House of Lords. There the Bill found only three defenders, two Lords and one Bishop, while it met four opponents from the Royal family alone;⁵ and the Lord Privy Seal, invoking the 'wisdom of our ancestors', boasted that there was one House at any rate which would look after the interests of the merchants and the colonists.⁶

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 168.

2. See Supra, pp. 52, & 64.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 169.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 177.

5. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 182.

6. Parliamentary Debates, ii, 929.

In due course the Lords adjourned the Bill until the next session.¹

After the first promising success this obstruction was disheartening. "I own", wrote Wilberforce to Gisborne, "it quite lowers my spirits to see all my hopes for this year at once blasted". "To be sure," he adds, "one session in such a case as this is not much".²

Delay did not mean idleness. Seeking to gain a point where he could, Wilberforce used his influence with Pitt to get the promise of a Proclamation prohibiting the importation of slaves in the newly-acquired Dutch colonies. On obtaining Pitt's promise he held a 'Conference in Palace Yard, - Brougham, Grant, Babington, William Smith, and Macaulay', and decided not to carry the question to Parliament, but to depend on private negotiations with Pitt.³ This decision taken, Wilberforce, having moved for rest to Lyme in Dorsetshire,⁴ began making thorough preparations for the expected battle of the following year. Stephen was already writing a pamphlet on slavery in the West Indies, and Wilberforce was anxious that all the others should also be working. He allotted a certain amount of labour to himself, and then wrote to Macaulay urging the enlistment of the band.

1. The adjournment was arranged however with the approval of Wilberforce, who saw that an immediate issue would be fatal, and who had his hopes pinned on the intermediates "those who might possibly be gained over".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 180-183.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 181.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 184.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 191.

Clarkson, he suggested, might be employed gathering evidence, and even the young Grants could search the Classical authors for apt material.¹ The next campaign was not to want for preparation.

But 1805 was not to see the end; and this time the blame could not be laid on the Lords. In the House of Commons Pitt openly avoided entering the debate, Fox and Wilberforce were both below their usual standard, the Irish "were absent or even turned against", and the Bill was rejected by a majority of seven.² Following the triumph of the previous year, this defeat hurt the more. "I never felt so much on any parliamentary occasion", says Wilberforce, "I could not sleep after first waking at night. The poor blacks rushed into my mind, and the guilt of our poor wicked land". "Still I will do all I can", he patiently added to Lord Muncaster, "If we cannot stop the whole of this accursed traffic, it is much to stop half of it".³

To stop half of it the brotherhood now took up the matter of the Order-in-Council which Pitt had promised the year before and of which, since his promise, nothing had been heard.

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 191-205. On page 203 is a list of "Propositions to be proved by extracts from African travelers".

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 212. Clarkson: History of the Abolition, Vol. 2, p. 499. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 314.

After the division Wilberforce was addressed by the wordly-wise clerk of the House of Commons, "Mr. Wilberforce, you ought not to expect to carry a measure of this kind... You and I have seen enough of life to know that people are not induced to act upon what affects their interests by any abstract arguments". "Mr. Hatsell", Wilberforce replied, "I do expect to carry it, and what is more, I feel assured I shall carry it speedily".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 213.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 215.

Many of the abolitionists were now convinced that Pitt had turned traitor to the cause.¹ Wilberforce could not share that belief; but he did think that Pitt had been strangely unconcerned, and he now wrote to him 'strongly', and three days later went to see him, and took so unusual a stand as to threaten that, failing action, he would join the opposition.² Pitt had no desire to lose so valuable a supporter as Wilberforce. He promised the Proclamation, and requested Wilberforce to have it prepared. Wilberforce thereupon called in Babington and Stephen to devise suitable regulations.³ It was then the 11th of March but the draft Proclamation was not returned for Wilberforce's approval until the 11th of May. Even then, for all their efforts, it was 'in a very unsatisfactory state', 'so framed as to be worse than -----'

1. There have been wide differences of opinion about Pitt's loyalty to the cause of Abolition. For the adverse criticisms see: Lecky: History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 5, pp. 64-66. Brougham's Speeches, ii, p. 14, a letter in Holland Rose's Pitt and Napoleon, pp. 321-324. (though Rose himself supports Pitt - see William Pitt and National Revival, pp. 477-479); and the Edinburgh Review, Vol. 12, July, 1808, pp. 367-368. (written by Coleridge). Preceding pages have shown that Stephen lost his faith in Pitt, and that others were at times angered with him. The younger Stephen in The Clapham Sect, in Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography was adverse to Pitt. It is of importance, however, to remember that Wilberforce never lost his faith in Pitt, and that Clarkson agreed with Wilberforce. (History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 503-506). The writer thinks that, under the circumstances, Pitt did all he could, without risking his government.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 216.
3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 216.

none!¹ Wilberforce again called in Stephen, and the two assisted the Attorney-General to repair the errors. Still the Proclamation was delayed, and was not finally granted until the 13th of September, 1805.²

That favour was the last Pitt was to grant the abolitionists. In January, 1806 he died; and his ministry was succeeded by the Ministry-of-All-the-Talents - the change being unquestionably to the advantage of the Clapham Sect. With Fox and Grenville both anxious to distinguish the administration by the achievement of Abolition, the way was greatly cleared. Yet caution was still necessary, and for the first session the abolitionists thought it the part of wisdom not to introduce a bill, but to prepare the way by Resolutions expressing disapproval of the Slave Trade. Fostered by Fox in the House of Commons, and Grenville in the House of Lords, these Resolutions were triumphantly carried.³

Certain now of success Wilberforce and Stephen made plans to forestall a sudden burst of slave-trading in the last days of its existence. They arranged a temporary enactment prohibiting the employment in the Trade of any fresh ships, and managed in the last weeks of Parliament to rush it through both Houses.⁴

Abolition was now practically secure; but the wary veterans had learned too much to relax their vigilance. The

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 230-231

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 234.

3. Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 2, pp. 509-562.

4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 263.

slave committee gathered regularly at Wilberforce's house, preparation was made for providing any required evidence, and 'no measure was omitted which the most watchful prudence could suggest'.¹ In August Wilberforce 'slipped into the snug and retired harbour of Lyme, for the purpose of careening and refitting'. He wished quiet to prepare a last vigorous pamphlet on the slave trade, which, he hoped, 'thrown in just in such circumstances', might be 'like a shot which hits between wind and water'. "It will be well", he observed shrewdly, "to supply people who wish to come over, with reasons for voting for us".²

His labours were abruptly terminated. In October he was interrupted by the unexpected news of a dissolution of parliament and the subsequent turmoil of an election campaign. He was not able to resume work on the pamphlet until December, and did not have it ready for the press until January, 1807.³

When the pamphlet appeared the battle had already auspiciously commenced. Grenville had agreed to make Abolition the first important business of the season, and had decided to reverse the usual procedure and to introduce the bill first into the House of Lords.⁴ There the Bill had a stormy passage, in the course of which the old prejudices

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 271-273.

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 273.

3. The Tract was of four hundred pages, and was published as A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, London, 1807.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 288.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, pp. 286-287.
 Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 336.

were once more invoked. The Earl of Westmoreland scented future danger to 'tithes and estates', because with abolitionist principles 'no property could be considered safe'; and declared that though 'the Presbyterian and the prelate, the Methodist and the field preacher, the Jacobin and the murderer' combined against British property, he at least would not yield to them.¹ Lord St. Vincent later 'entered his solemn and final protest against this measure of national ruin, and walked out of the house'.² But the long campaign had changed even the House of Lords, and in little over a month, - by February 10th - the Bill was fought through.³

On the same day the first reading was carried in the House of Commons, though with the concession to the enemy that the second reading should be postponed for a fortnight.⁴ The interval meant another burst of activity for the Clapham Sect. Wilberforce called together his Abolition Committee to check the lists of the House of Commons, and found 'a terrific list of doubtfuls';⁵ whereupon each member of the group selected the men to whom he might have access, and the whole company set out to win votes for abolition by a campaign of personal interviews.⁶ To the very day of the second reading they laboured together, and then repaired to the House to take

1. Parliamentary Debates, viii, 667.

2. Parliamentary Debates, viii, 693.

3. Ibid, viii, 701-703.

4. Ibid, viii, 717-722.

5. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 295.

6. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 268.

their places on the floor or to crowd the galleries.¹ They knew that this was to be their test night, and they had confidence that at last they could win. Their hopes were not belied; the evening was one of unalloyed triumph. The House, too, felt that the great moment had come, and betrayed 'an astonishing eagerness'.² Six or eight members were on their feet at once to join in this last assault on the iniquity which Britain was now to abolish.³ The enthusiasm mounted with the impassioned speeches to its moving climax at Sir Samuel Romilly's peroration. When Romilly reached his brilliant contrast of Wilberforce and Napoleon⁴ the staid old House cast off its traditional conventions, rose to its feet, burst into cheers, and made the roof of St. Stephen's echo to 'an ovation such as it had given to no other living man',⁵ - while Wilberforce himself, overcome with emotion 'sat bent in his chair, his head in his hands, and the tears streaming down his face'.⁶

In a short while Wilberforce rose again to his feet and in 'a splendour of eloquence'⁷ delivered his last Abolition speech. And then the Sect watched the eventful division, and saw Abolition carried by the tremendous majority of 283 - 16.⁸

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1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p.298.
 2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p.296.
 3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p.296.
 4. Parliamentary Debates: viii, 978-979.
 5. Coupland: Wilberforce, p.341.
 6. Ibid, p.341.
 7. Life of Wilberforce: Vol. 3, p.297.
 8. Parliamentary Debates, viii, 995.

That division settled the matter. There was no further hope for the opponents of abolition. The third reading passed smoothly, and on March 25th, 1807, the Abolition Bill received the Royal assent.¹

The Clapham Sect, however, did not need to wait for the third reading. They knew well enough that their victory had been won, and by a common impulse they gathered to share triumph together. Late as the hour was, they moved in a happy company to Wilberforce's house in Palace Yard, there to rejoice with their honoured leader. How many were there is not certain; but Henry Thornton is mentioned, and Granville Sharp, and Grant and his son Robert, and Macaulay, and a new-found friend Reginald Heber.² And none was so happy as Wilberforce himself. Seeing Henry Thornton, his unfailing help and counsellor in all the years of weary struggle, standing alone with a grave look on his face, Wilberforce in his happy fashion went over and inquired, "Well, Henry, what shall we abolish next?"³

The Clapham Sect cannot, of course, claim the entire glory for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. There were many factors entering into the long struggle, and, especially in later years, illustrious names which this account could not even mention. The History of Abolition has wider reaches than

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 302.

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 298.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 298.

the present chapter.

"A long campaign of humanitarianism under able men; a readjustment of the economic interests of the West Indians; a growth of industry and commerce so that the slave trade was of smaller relative importance in the total commerce of the country, although absolutely greater; the prospect of carrying the commerce on under other flags or illicitly; the example of abolition by other countries; the prospect of gaining universal abolition at the next peace congress; the determination of Fox and Grenville; all these played their part. Without humanitarian leadership, however, there would have been failure".¹

The lines may be drawn even more closely. Without the Clapham Sect there would have been failure. They did not merely take part in the movement; they made the movement. Without their leadership, their concerted labours, their infectious passion, and their unwearying persistence, there seems no reasonable ground for believing that the Abolition campaign could have been carried, at least in their generation, to its successful finish.

1. Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, pp. 129-130.

Chapter Three

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

"What shall we abolish next?" The Clapham Sect did not need to seek out any new enterprises. Already they had committed themselves to other causes, involving conflict with other vested interests not less influential and scarcely less intolerant.

The closing years of the eighteenth century were critical not only for Britain's relations to Africa, but also for her relations to India. Anglo-Indian affairs had degenerated to 'dire scandal and confusion'¹ of which the purple eloquence of Edmund Burke had just presented an unforgettable picture, and to which Pitt's India Bill of 1784 had responded with at least partial acknowledgement that British power in India involved moral obligations on the British parliament.

Yet both Pitt and Burke envisioned but a meagre relationship between Britain and India. They cherished a great respect for India's ancient civilization. They desired that the intercourse between the two civilizations should be based on the stern justice which was the pride of their own. But they had no thought, for instance, that Britain was obligated to promote education in India, or to encourage a less sanguinary morality.

1. G.M.Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 46.

They thought that Britain's relations with India were commercial, and that her responsibilities to India were political. With education, morals, and religion they had as little concern as with fashion and etiquette. Though gross abominations might openly characterize the life under their rule they would feel no responsibility whatever. The British indeed generally prided themselves on such an outlook. They made public boast that they never propagated their own religion. In 1793 Lord Macartney at the Court of China explained proudly that "the English...have no priests or chaplains with them, as have other European nations".¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that when statesmen were beginning to be troubled about the obligations which justice to India involved, Christians were beginning to be troubled about the further obligations which Christianity involved.

Christian principles hitherto had, indeed, been quite as much ignored as had political justice. Cynical observers said that Christians were 'unbaptised' on their way to India;² and the incredibly pagan level of Anglo-Indian life did not belie the comment. The natives for long wondered whether the English man had any God, and suspected rather that his origin was in the Devil. When, after eighty years residence, the East India Company built its first church, and it became fashionable to attend service on Christmas and Easter, natives

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 28.

2. Harford: Recollections of Wilberforce, p. 35.

came in throngs to see the strange spectacle of the white man at worship.¹ The official acknowledgement, however, was not very convincing. The natives repeated in broken English, "Christian religion, devil religion; Christian much drunk; Christian much do wrong; much beat; much abuse others".² Anglo-Indian society, indeed, largely abandoned the virtues of its own race, and added the vices of another.³ Drinking, duelling and gambling became the order of the day; and no less the order were concubinage and nautch dances, and on occasion an official performance of pagan rites.⁴

The long monopoly of a trading company bent solely on

1. Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p. 52.
2. Kaye: Christianity in India, pp. 41-42.
3. The pages of Sir John Kaye's Christianity in India, though not unsympathetic to the Nabobs, yet bear witness to the dissolute nature of white society in India previous to 1785. (See pp. 38-116). Even in 1810 a Captain William-son who wrote a book to "promote the welfare" of the young men of the East India Company's service, and who dedicated his book to the Court of Directors, included as a matter of course a whole section about native mistresses, their ornaments and cosmetics, and the expense of their keep. He told amusedly of one elderly gentleman who maintained sixteen of varied age and appointments, and who, when asked how he looked after such a number, replied, "Oh! I give them a little rice and let them run about".
An East-Indian Vade-Mecum, Dedication, pp. 412-458.
4. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, became an avowed pagan, and annually sacrificed a cock on the tomb of his native wife. (Stock: History of the C.M.S., p. 51.) In 1802 the English officials went in procession to a heathen temple to present in the name of the Company a thank offering to the sanguinary Goddess Kali for the success which the English had previously obtained. Thousands of natives watched the English officials presenting offerings to this Idol.
Hobbes: Reminiscences of Seventy Years, Vol. 1, p. 59.

commercial exploitation had provided for India a steady witness to the worst in white civilization, and no testimony of the best. When reform came it was a long, slow, process, receiving impulses from many sources, but especially marking the influence of one great Anglo-Indian, who in a later day was called, 'the father and founder of modern missionary effort in Great Britain's Indian Empire'¹ Charles Grant of the Clapham Sect.

BEGINNINGS IN INDIA

When Charles Grant commenced his Indian career he fell so far into conventional habits that, in a few years, despite rapid promotion in the Company's service, he found himself carried by extravagant living and reckless gambling into almost disastrous debt.²

Yet in his early years in Scotland Grant had been under deep religious influence, influence which the years in India had not eradicated, and which, recalled by serious family tragedy,³ led in 1776 to his conversion - a conversion which foretokened not only a new life for Grant, but also a new interest for the Clapham Sect, and a new chapter in the history of India.

For a few years after his conversion Grant lived quietly in India, becoming close friends with his fellow official and -----

1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 395.

2. Ibid, p. 66. Grant had also ventured into unfortunate business deals, and had mounted up his debts to £20,000.

3. Ibid, pp. 54-57. In 1774 Grant lost his 'good uncle' who had much influence over him; in 1775 he lost his brother and close friend; in 1776 he lost both his children within nine days.

kindred spirit, John Shore, then also beginning his religious life.¹ But in 1784, one year before Wilberforce's conversion, Grant first became concerned with what was to be the central passion of his life. He received from Dr. Coke, a coadjutor of John Wesley, a letter inquiring about the possibility of establishing Christian Missions in India.² Correspondence followed; but Grant thought that a mission should be operated under official patronage, and John Wesley had no faith in such a method. Moreover, though Grant still urged them to commence their mission, the Methodists, burdened with missions in Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the United States, found themselves at the time unable to attempt an added mission to India. Hence the first scheme came to nothing.³

The idea, however, did not die. From that time Grant became absorbed in developing a possible scheme of missions in India. In 1786 he was joined by a young clergyman, David Brown, who had come to India to superintend the Military Orphan Asylum. Grant found in David Brown a congenial spirit, with a timely knowledge of the men in England, who might be sympathetic to a missionary enterprise.⁴ Accordingly the

1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 64.

2. Ibid, p. 98. Cf. Grant's journal for Nov. 21, 1784: "Read two days ago a letter from Dr. Coke, in connection with Mr. Wesley, with a scheme for a Mission to this country, and queries for information and assistance. A great project! May it be well influenced. May I answer rightly".

3. Ibid; p. 100.

4. Ibid, p. 101.

next year the two friends worked out together a very careful 'Proposal' of an Indian Mission, and sent copies to fourteen likely men in England.¹ Among these the main hopes were centred on Charles Simeon to interest the clergy, and William Wilberforce to interest the laity.²

The judgement was vindicated. Simeon and Wilberforce both thereafter made the introduction of Christianity to India one of the main interests of their lives, and both took it under their charge as a cause 'emphatically Claphamic'.³

Nothing however was immediately accomplished. But - unfortunately with an injudicious choice of agent - Grant attempted to establish at his own expense a private Mission in Gumalti.⁴ The attempt was soon abandoned; and early in 1790, after eighteen years residence, Grant left India and returned to England, there to pursue further his cherished -----

1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 106. It is an interesting coincidence that when Wilberforce wrote in his diary that God had given him two great objects in life, the papers were already on the seas, bringing him a third.
2. Ibid, p. 120. And cf. a letter from Brown to Simeon in Carus' Memoirs of Simeon, p. 79, "Our hopes are particularly fixed on Mr. Wilberforce. It is to his influence alone that we hope the minister will regard such a project, and ask for it the countenance of Majesty". The 'Proposal' of course embodied Grant's old idea of a Mission under sanction of the Civil government.
3. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 558. "In 1830 Simeon wrote on his copy of the 'Proposal', 'It merely shows how early God enabled me to act for India; -to provide for which, has now for forty-two years been a principal and an incessant object of my care and labour". Carus; Memoirs of Simeon, p. 75. When Wilberforce received his copy he immediately brought it to the notice of Pitt to bespeak his interest. Private Papers of William Wilberforce, pp. 20-21.
4. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 5. This was the first attempt by any Protestant to reach the native peoples of India. Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 131-140.

purpose.¹

In England Grant speedily made acquaintance with Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, and his name was very soon appearing regularly in Wilberforce's diary.² Within a few months he moved out to Clapham and took a house next to Henry Thornton's.³

In England, however, he did not meet much encouragement for his cherished scheme. "Faint hopes people have of Missions", he wrote in August, 1790.⁴ But, in approved Clapham fashion, he undertook to further his cause by spreading knowledge. He began to prepare an elaborate and well-considered treatise, planned at first for private circulation, and designed to set forth with all possible strength and earnestness the case for Christian missions in India.⁵ Then in 1792 when John Shore returned from India, Grant arranged for him also to meet Wilberforce,⁶ and later in the same year joined Wilberforce in persuading Shore to return to India as Governor-General.⁷ He also endeavoured to interest

1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 155.
2. The first reference to Grant in the published section of Wilberforce's diary is in 1791, February: "24th. Breakfasted with Grant". Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 288. But Morris (Op.cit., p. 168) says that they must have met about November, 1790.
3. Morris: Op.cit., p. 168.
4. Ibid, p. 184.
5. Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, by Charles Grant, 1792. Dr. George Smith, in Twelve Indian Statesmen, p. 2, calls it "the noblest treatise on the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, and the means of improving their moral condition, which the English language has even yet seen".
6. Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1, p. 224.
7. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 241; Morris: Op.cit., p. 180; Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 368.

in his scheme persons of importance, and, through the introduction of Wilberforce, interviewed the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury - a preparatory move opening the way for later progress.¹

THE 1793 CHARTER

All this was minor skirmishing. The first opportunity for real action came in 1793 with the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. The Clapham brotherhood had been eagerly anticipating the opportunity - Grant providing in this cause the local knowledge that Macaulay and Stephen had provided in the Abolition cause. Grant carefully drafted for Wilberforce's presentation to parliament two Resolutions which urged, cautiously enough, the adoption of measures designed gradually to promote 'the religious and moral improvement' of the inhabitants of India, and the appointment by the East India Company of chaplains in India and on board the larger merchantmen; for the resident and travelling Europeans.²

These Resolutions were passed by the Committee, and then by the House. As in the Abolition struggle the way was easy until the interests were aroused. Emboldened by success Wilberforce then added an extra clause providing more definitely, but still cautiously, that the Directors of the East India Company should be empowered and required to send out 'fit and -----
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1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 186.

2. Ibid, p. 182; & Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 24 & 392.

proper persons' to act as 'schoolmasters, missionaries, or otherwise'. This too was passed.¹ The Brotherhood, their Abolition cause now in dark eclipse, were delighted with this compensating victory. "The hand of providence was never more visible than in this East Indian affair", Wilberforce records in his Journal as he 'called at Grant's', "How properly is Grant affected".²

The rejoicing was too soon. 'Like a giant aroused from sleep India House began to stir'.³ The Court of Proprietors, with reason enough, had no fancy to see their preserves invaded by Methodists and 'enthusiasts'. They held a special meeting and resolved to put a stop to such nonsense.⁴ Immediately they set in action all the forces which they were so well able to command; and when the debate was resumed, and the Bill read for the third time, with Wilberforce on hand to fight for his clauses, and Grant in the gallery with the 'melancholy pleasure' of watching the unequal combat, East Indian puissance was abundantly demonstrated.⁵ The 'little tumult in the court of proprietors'⁶ had troubled the waters in Parliament, and the Bill was borne away on the tide. Wilberforce but vainly protested that no rash nor unfitting

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp.25 & 392. Full text of Resolutions is given in the Life of Wilberforce, Vol.2, pp. 392-393; & in Kaye: Christianity in India, p.518.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p.25.
3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 384.
4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p.26, "East India Directors met and strongly reprobated my clauses".
5. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 183.
6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p.27.

measures were premeditated, and fruitlessly argued that the intention was not 'to break up by violence existing institutions, and force our faith upon the natives of India; but gravely, silently, and systematically to prepare the way for the gradual diffusion of religious truth'.¹ He might just as well have been silent. The power of commerce was against him; and commerce was too powerful to be troubled even by Wilberforce.

"The East India directors and proprietors have triumphed", he wrote to Gisborne, "All my clauses were last night struck out on the third reading of the Bill, and--twenty millions of people...are left..to the providential protection of - Brama".²

The defeat revealed how impracticable was Grant's first Mission scheme. Grant had hoped for a Mission patronized by the Company and the Government. Wilberforce's Resolutions did not venture nearly so far; but even they had met a response crushingly adverse. 'The East India Charter Act of 1793 was the true reply to the Calcutta plan of 1787'.³

INDIA, AFRICA, AUSTRALIA - ENGLAND.

The Clapham Sect were not completely defeated. They had yet more strings to their bows, and more men at their call. India was not the only field that had attracted their attention. The colony at Sierra Leone, of which Macaulay was now governor, was itself in part a Missionary venture, freely admitting Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries, and was -----

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 26.

2. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 27.

3. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 21. Wilberforce's resolutions failed "from the simple fact that there was then positively no missionary spirit in the nation". Ibid.

later to become the centre from which missionaries were sent to the natives of the surrounding territories.¹ But the Clapham Sect had even wider interests. After the American Revolution, Australia had been selected as the dumping ground for convicts sentenced to transportation. The first shipload were gathered in the fall of 1786; and by some chance Wilberforce learned that they were to be transported, and left in a strange land without any offices of religion whatever. Wilberforce at once communicated with Henry Thornton, and the two hastened to Pitt. They succeeded in arranging for the appointment of a chaplain, and managed to secure a chaplain who would go.² And on October 22nd Henry Thornton took this chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson, to Woolwich to be introduced to his hapless parishioners, and to undertake the duty of carrying the gospel to Botany Bay.³

The year 1787, therefore, saw the infancy of three Clapham schemes: A Negro colony was sent to Sierra Leone;⁴ a chaplain was sent to Botany Bay; and a 'Proposal' for a missionary enterprise was drafted in India.⁵ These three tributaries were destined to flow into one river greater than the originators had imagined.

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 116-128.

2. Digest of S.P.G. Reports, p. 387.

Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 6.

3. Life of Henry Venn, pp. 439-440.

4. See Supra, p. 52

5. In 1787 too Grant began his private mission to Gumalti, the first English mission to the natives of India. See Supra, p. 87

An exterior agency was the uniting channel. In 1783 a few clergymen, of whom John Newton and Richard Cecil were the most distinguished, had formed the Eclectic Society to discuss matters of common interest to Evangelicals.¹ The Society gradually enlarged, took in a few laymen, and in time gathered its representatives from the Clapham group, with whom from the first it had been in close and sympathetic touch. In 1786 the Society, knowing of Wilberforce's move for a chaplain for the convicts, gave a meeting to a discussion on, "What is the best method of planting and propagating the Gospel in Botany Bay?"² In 1789 after Grant's 'Proposal' had come to England the Eclectics were again au courant, and called a meeting to discuss, "What is the best method of propagating the Gospel in the East Indies?"³ In 1791 after the institution of the Sierra Leone Company the Eclectics became interested in that new field, and gathered to discuss, "What is the best method of propagating the Gospel in Africa?"⁴ After 1791 the Eclectic Society did not again discuss missions for five years. But in 1796,⁵ Simeon, -----

1. Pratt: Eclectic Notes, p. 3. Unfortunately the Notes of the Eclectic discussions were not preserved until 1798.
2. Pratt: Memoirs of Josiah Pratt, p. 463. Rev. Mr. Johnson, the chaplain, not yet departed for Botany Bay, was invited to the meeting, but did not manage to be present.
3. Ibid, p. 464.
4. Ibid, p. 464. Melville Horne, the chaplain to Sierra Leone, was present at the meeting.
5. In the meantime the Baptist and London Missionary Societies had been formed, and the Evangelical Magazine (Vol. 3, p.12) had expressed the hope that not only Evangelical Dissenters and Methodists might join in a Missionary Society but also "members of the Established Church of Evangelical sentiments". In 1795 Simeon had discussed at the Rauceby Society (similar to the Eclectic) the question of Missions, and had agreed to get in touch with Wilberforce and Grant about the possibility
(continued)



Clapham Common, 1823

(From the Clapham Antiquarian Society),

Another view of Clapham Common

Clapham was still 'a village of nightingales', with three miles of country driving separating it from the city of which it is now a suburban section. The Common itself is still preserved.

now an Eclectic member and greatly interested in the new undenominational London Missionary Society, proposed a discussion on the question, "With what propriety, and in what mode, can a mission be attempted to the heathen from the Established Church?"¹ The Eclectics were dubious. The majority were afraid of the opposition of the bishops, and shrank from seeming to interfere with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, (S.P.G.), and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (S.P.C.K.). 'Not more than two or three' believed that anything could be accomplished within the Established church.² But the two or three had been seized with a great idea, and Basil Woodd, one of them, later declared that 'this conversation proved the foundation of the Church Missionary Society'.³

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Further progress leads from the Eclectic Society back to Clapham. If Clapham action inspired Eclectic thought, Eclectic thought in turn stimulated Clapham action. In 1796 indeed the Clapham Sect were chiefly occupied with another Missionary scheme. Robert Haldane of Scotland was -----

1. Carus: Memoirs of Simeon, p. 111.

2. Ibid, p. 111.

3. Carus: Memoirs of Simeon, p. 111.

of action. The idea of a separate Church Missionary Society is said to have occurred here for the first time; but the effort seems to have been dropped.

Carus: Memoirs of Simeon, pp. 110-111.

Overton: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 256.

now endeavouring to get government sanction for another Mission in India, a private endeavour to be undertaken and financed by himself.¹ Not surprisingly he met with no more success than did Wilberforce and Grant three years earlier. But the brotherhood had naturally been interested in the attempt, had employed their influence on behalf of Haldane, and, as usual, had gathered frequently for discussions and 'Cabinet Councils' on the matter.² When the plan was finally laid aside the brotherhood turned their attention to the Eclectic proposals.

Simeon, of course, would have brought the Eclectic discussions to the Clapham council rooms. The first definite reference to Clapham response appears in Wilberforce's Journal, which, in July, 1797, mentions a dinner at Henry Thornton's, "where Simeon and Grant to talk over Mission

1. In their account of this matter Wilberforce's sons were as unfair to Haldane as they continually were to most others with whom they had no sympathy. For a discussion of the Haldane Mission plan see Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 176-177 & Memoirs of Haldane, pp. 106-133. Wilberforce's sons later acknowledged, with no other explanation, that, through lack of knowledge, they had not done justice to Haldane.

Correspondence of Wilberforce, Preface, p. xxvii.

2. The following are some of the references which from the context seem to refer to Haldane's scheme:
 1796: "Oct. 8, Very busy seeing Pitt and Dundas about... East India Missions".
 Dec. 10th. "To Grant's to meet Haldane."
 Dec. 22nd., "House, went home with Dundas and Pitt - Mission business in hand."
 Dec. 23rd. "Breakfasted early with Dundas and Eliot on Mission business; Dundas complying and appointing us to dinner again where Grant... Sat long".
 Dec. 26th., "Grant, Eliot, and Babington at dinner - consultation on East India Missions, and discussing all evening."

And early the next year, "A Cabinet council on the business. Henry, Thornton, Grant, and myself are the junto".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 176, 185, 186, 193.

scheme".¹ Simeon seems to have persisted in his enthusiasm, for two days later Wilberforce wrote, "Simeon with us - his heart glowing with love of Christ. How full he is of love, and of desire to promote the spiritual benefit of others."² Again a little later the diary mentions another gathering at Thornton's³ for Missionary meeting - Simeon - Charles Grant - Venn. Something, but not much, done, - Simeon in earnest".⁴

All these discussions, however, issued in no definite action, until in 1799 the Eclectic Society - now including Simeon, Venn, Grant, and a close friend Josiah Pratt,⁵ was recalled to the question by Venn, who on the 18th of March introduced another Missionary discussion by a prepared speech on, "What methods can we use more effectually to

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 225.
2. Carus: Memoirs of Simeon, p. 150.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 251. The biographers inaccurately comment that this was "the first commencement" of a plan which "issued in the year 1800 in the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East." "The first commencement" must be credited to the Eclectic Society; and, as succeeding pages will show, the Society was instituted not in 1800, but in 1799. The error arose in a curious way. Waiting on the patronage of the Archbishop the Society did not hold an Anniversary in 1800. The first anniversary being held in 1801, the fourth in 1804, and so on, the error became almost universal that the Society was founded in 1800. The Rev. Charles Hole in his exhaustive Early History of the C.M.S. (p. 97) points out this error, and shows that in the early years it even found its way into the C.M.S. reports. The error is repeated in Coupland's admirable Wilberforce (p. 378), and in Mathieson's English Church Reform (p. 15).
4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 251. In 1797 also, to awaken Missionary interest in his colleagues at India House, Grant laid on the table of the Court of Directors his Observations (see Supra p. 88.) published at first for private circulation.
Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 169 & 215.
5. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 30 & Supra p. 23.

Promote the Knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen?"¹

Grant proposed the founding of a Missionary Seminary; but Simeon advocated a Missionary Society, and with characteristic promptitude set forth three questions, "What can we do? When shall we do it? How shall we do it?"²

After vigorous discussion it was decided to form a Missionary Society forthwith. John Venn laid down the dictum that the society must be conducted 'on the church principle; but not on the High Church principle,'³ - thus distinguishing it respectively from the London Missionary Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Pratt added the qualification that it must 'be kept in Evangelical hands'.⁴

Two weeks afterwards, on April 1st, 1799, the eager group held another meeting to draft the rules for the proposed Society,⁵ and on April 12th, at the Castle and Falcon Inn in Aldersgate Street - in the very room where, four years earlier, the London Missionary Society had been founded - they formally brought into being their long projected Missionary Society.⁶

They selected the officers with great care. Wilberforce

1. Pratt: Eclectic Notes, p. 96.
2. Carus: Simeon, pp. 168-169.
"How shall we do it? It is hopeless to wait for missionaries. Send out Catechists. Plan two years ago. Mr. Wilberforce" ..These are the Eclectic Notes. -Evidently a reference to what Wilberforce had proposed at Henry Thornton's in 1797. (See Supra, p.96. Eclectic Notes, pp.98-99.
3. Pratt: Eclectic Notes, p. 98.
4. Pratt: Memoirs of Pratt, p. 471.
5. Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p.64.
6. Ibid, Vol. 1, p.69; Pratt: Eclectic Notes, pp. 96-100.
It should be mentioned that neither Simeon nor Grant were present at that meeting. Beside Venn the only Clapham representative was Charles Elliott.
Pratt: Memoirs of Pratt, pp.13-14.

was requested to be President; but he did not wish to take that position. So he and Charles Grant were made Vice-Presidents.¹ Henry Thornton, the accustomed man of business, was made treasurer; and John Venn was appointed Chairman of the Committee - which included Josiah Pratt, Charles Elliott and Thomas Babington.² Thus far the Society had not decided on its name, which might almost have been The Clapham Missionary Society. The decision was soon made, and revealed clearly enough the Clapham concern for Sierra Leone and India. The name was, "The Society for Missions to Africa and the East".³ Next, John Venn and Simeon drafted a set of rules for the Society, and Venn wrote a Prospectus: An Account of a Society for Missions to Africa and the East.⁴ No less important a duty was to secure if

1. Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p.69. Later James Stephen was also made a Vice-President.
Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p.271.
2. Pratt: Memoirs of Pratt, pp. 13-14. Simeon, of all the men the most likely, was not on the Committee. Stock: (Op.Cit., p.70) suggests that the reason was that in the days of slow travel it was essential that the Committee men should be those living near together in London. Zachary Macaulay was not in England in the month of the Society's formation. He returned later in the same year, in October visited the Committee to discuss African questions, and later became a member. Hole: Op. Cit. p.97. In 1801 the Committee is recorded as thanking him for a letter on the education of Africans. (Ibid, p.97) In the same year the Society consulted with Grant and decided to translate the Scriptures in Oriental languages. Ibid, p. 163. The voice of the Society was ever the voice of Clapham.
3. The later name, The Church Missionary Society, was first used as a convenient abbreviation, and was not adopted officially till 1812. As early as 1805, however, Henry Martyn in his Journal refers to it as the Church Missionary Society, indicating that the title must have been then in use. (Hole: Op. Cit., pp.70, 97, 180, 231). For convenience this thesis will hereafter refer to the Society as the C.M.S.
4. Hole: Op. Cit., p.43.

possible the approval of the church authorities. Wilberforce, Grant, and Venn now interviewed the Archbishop of Canterbury to present a copy of the Rules, and of Venn's Prospectus, and a special letter signed by Venn as chairman of the Committee.¹ The Archbishop responded with a caution indicative of the distrust with which so 'enthusiastic' an undertaking as a Missionary Society was then regarded. In spite of the repeated interviews he delayed more than a year before he committed himself to any reply; and even then he regretted that he 'could not with propriety at once express his full concurrence and approbation', though he summoned up his courage, and ventured magnificently to promise that he would 'look on their proceedings with candour'.²

Even this tepid commitment seemed to be more than some of the Society anticipated; and with the encouragement it generated they decided to proceed more boldly in their designs.³

The greatest difficulties were yet to come. There now opened two problems: to open India to missionaries; and to obtain missionaries for India or anywhere else. The Society quickly learned that the idea of missionary service was almost

1. Grant, it will be remembered, had in 1792 interviewed the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury about his earlier scheme for missions in India. See Supra, p. 89.

2. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 58. Good old Bishop Porteus however went a step further and promised to ordain suitable men for missionary work.

Overton: English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 257.

3. The day afterward the committee got in touch with Zachary Macaulay to inquire about the prospects of missionary endeavour in Sierra Leone.

Hole: Op.Cit., p. 127.

foreign to contemporary Christian thought. Even among the 'serious men' at Cambridge Simeon discovered that no one responded. "I see more and more", he said sadly, "Who it is that must thrust out labourers into His harvest".¹ After waiting until 1802 with no volunteers the Society in some humiliation accepted two missionaries from Germany, and after bringing them for a preliminary residence at Clapham, despatched them to Africa.²

East India Missions were still more difficult. No volunteers appeared until 1802, when Henry Martyn, 'Simeon's spiritual son',³ offered himself for service. But the arrival of the man only emphasized the remaining difficulty of getting him to India. Since 1793 the Company's regulations had been made increasingly stringent. Even Charles Grant could not get passage on a Company's ship for a man with the avowed intention of preaching to the Indians. And even if the missionary did reach India he was liable to deportation on arrival.⁴ But Grant was not without resource. If he could

1. Stock: History of the C.M.S., p. 74.
2. Ibid, p. 83. The C.M.S. in its first fifteen years sent out 24 missionaries. Of these 17 were Germans. And of the remaining 7 English only 3 were ordained. Stock: Op.Cit., p.91.
3. Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 183.
4. Carey and Thomas had arrived in India without the Company's license on Nov. 11, 1793 - just a fortnight after John Shore had become Governor-General. But, though with an unsympathetic administration, they would have found more difficulties, the Charter Act of 1793 making them guilty as unlicensed strangers of high misdemeanour did not become law in India till February, 1794. Carey avoided later trouble by becoming an official in an indigo factory.

Hole: Early History, pp. 153-154. Hole always puts the Company in the best possible light.

In 1813 Wilberforce wrote, "No missionaries have ever been suffered to go to India in the Company's ships - the
(continued)

not send a missionary he could get appointment for a chaplain in the company's service.¹ The Missionary Society 'cheerfully acquiesced, as the appointment...might ultimately lead, under God, to considerable influence among the Heathen'.² So in 1805, six years after the Missionary Society was formed, Henry Martyn, the first volunteer, departed for India,³ not as a missionary, but as a chaplain to the East India Company.

GAINS AND REVERSES

Meanwhile the Clapham Sect were pursuing other labours outside the circle of the Missionary Society. They alleviated their defeat in the Charter struggle by the

1. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 220.
2. Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p. 82.
3. Ibid, p. 82.

Henry Martyn, though counted one of the great missionaries, was never a missionary in the ordinary sense. He remained a Chaplain to the East India Company at a salary of £1200 a year. Yet he was a chaplain by necessity, a missionary by intent, and he performed really heroic missionary labours.

Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 555.

Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 184.

only ships..which have sailed for India; they have therefore stolen out....circuitously and unlicensed....but it is due to the Government abroad to say that several of the missionaries, when there, have been kindly treated. It is the Court of Directors at home that is hostile, more than the Government in India".

Harford: Recollections of Wilberforce, p. 29.

appointment, in 1793, of John Shore as Governor-General of India,¹ and the election, in 1794, of Charles Grant as Director of the East India Company.² Thereafter, through these men, they were able to render signal service to the furtherance of Christianity in India. Grant used his influence to secure the appointment of suitable men as chaplains;³ and the men he selected: Charles Buchanan, Henry Martyn, Thomas Thomson, David Corrie, and Daniel Wilson, left their mark permanently on Anglo-Indian life. Of these Charles Buchanan,

1. Wilberforce was present when Pitt and Dundas made their decision in favour of Shore. And Wilberforce and Grant combined to induce Shore to accept. The appointment from their standpoint was a fortunate one. Shore, indeed, was not able to do much to further their missionary schemes. He did build a new church; but he said that the Europeans would not permit the natives to be Christianized, 'they needed to be Christianized themselves'. In 1795 Shore reported that most of the regular chaplains were not 'respectable characters'. Yet Shore did accomplish something. Sir John Kaye said of him "At a time when to be corrupt was to be like one's neighbours, he (Shore) had preserved, in poverty and privation, the most inflexible integrity". And when he became Governor-General, 'he resolved to make it be seen that the Christian religion was the religion of the State'. His influence did something to elevate the tone of official life.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 229.

Morris: Life of Grant, p. 173.

Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1, pp. 291, 294, (347).

Stock: History of the C.M.S., p. 55.

Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 141.

Christian Observer, 1834, p. 283.

2. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 210. Before he had been a year on the Directorship Grant succeeded in getting an official despatch protesting against the profanation of the Sabbath; and two years later he got an order for churches to be built. No move however was made in India and the order remained dormant for twenty years. Morris: Op.Cit., pp. 214-215.
3. D.N.B. Article Charles Grant.
Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 408.
George Smith: Twelve Indian Statesmen, p. 20.

appointed in 1796,¹ takes the biggest part in the home labours of the Clapham Sect.

From his earliest days in India Buchanan had a distinguished career, and he soon achieved an eminent place in Anglo-Indian society. He became greatly concerned for the evangelization of India, and, early in the nineteenth century, to stimulate greater interest among the English, he introduced a method similar to that which had won Clarkson to the Abolition cause. He provided large prizes in Oxford and Cambridge for essays 'connected with the civilization and moral improvement of India'.² Through this plan he attracted the interest of many students who afterward became eminent in Indian labours - including young Charles Grant and Hugh Pearson afterward Buchanan's biographer.³ To supplement these efforts he wrote in 1805 A Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India.⁴ The book created 'a great sensation';⁵ but all his efforts, and the whole Christian

1. See Supra, p. 22. & Morris: Op.Cit., pp. 220-221. While Buchanan was at Cambridge, a protege of Thornton and Simeon, Grant, after his arrival from India, visited Simeon to discuss with him the Mission scheme. Simeon took Buchanan to the interview, and Buchanan was inspired by Grant to prepare to be a missionary in India. The times rendered it impossible for him to go definitely as a missionary; but four years later Grant obtained for him a chaplaincy in the Company's service - with what important results succeeding events will show.
 Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 1, p. 77.
 Hole: Early History of C.M.S., p. 19.
 Kaye: Christianity in India, pp. 170-172.
 Morris: Life of Grant, p. 187.
2. Overton: History of the English Church in the 19th Century, p. 265.
3. Ibid, p. 266.
4. Pearson: Op.Cit., pp. 303-304. Lord Teignmouth wrote a review of the book in the Christian Observer, 1806.
5. Overton: Op.Cit., p. 266.

movement in India were soon negatived by untoward happenings in the Indian army.

In 1806 a serious mutiny occurred amongst the Sepoy soldiers at Vellore, and at once gave the opponents of missions an opportunity of ascribing the cause to the disturbing effects of missionary propaganda. When the news reached England an even greater storm was aroused there. A member of the East India Company, named Thomas Twining, wrote a pamphlet urging the Court of Directors to expel all missionaries from India, and to stop all printing of the scriptures in Indian languages. He expressed alarm, horror indeed, at the activities of the newly-formed British and Foreign Bible Society, and of Buchanan himself. He warned them and 'their patrons at Clapham and Leadenhall Street' that 'religious innovation' was extremely dangerous to British interests in India, that, indeed, British interests could be secured only by allowing the people to continue in their 'prejudices and absurdities'.¹ A 'war of pamphlets' ² ensued, in which a Bengal Officer, Major Scott-Waring, joined in the attack, and recommended a clean sweep of every English Missionary, and personal recall of Buchanan as a culprit.³

1. Kaye: Christianity in India, pp. 152-154.
2. The 'war' unsheathed many swords. Sydney Smith flourished his in the pages of the Edinburgh Review, in his now notorious article on 'Consecrated cobblers'. Southey made what riposte he could in the first number of the Quarterly. Wilberforce felt that Sydney Smith's article had done serious damage to their cause. See Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 364.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 359. "The Court seemed in general but too well-disposed to such proceedings". But the Clapham Sect had powerful influence in the East India Company, and Grant and Teignmouth with the support of their friends were able to block the scheme. Though not recalled Buchanan soon returned home.

But, before any rash measures were undertaken Lord Teignmouth joined in the fray. His prestige as an ex-Governor-General, his wide knowledge, and his conspicuous moderation on all subjects, gave him impressive influence. His pamphlet¹ was a bit heavy - as were most of the others - but it was a crushing reply to the extravagances of his opponents.

"It was said, at the time, and with undeniable truth, that if this pamphlet had appeared at the beginning of the controversy, no other need have been written. It was sensible, argumentative, conclusive; and it demolished the Waringites".²

Another phase of the struggle began when Buchanan presently returned from India.³ His arrival was as important to the popular side of Missions as the arrival of Grant in 1790 had been to the official side.⁴ Buchanan immediately set to work to re-orient the mission conflict. "Instead of flinging pamphlets at his opponents he preached sermons to his friends".⁵ Early in 1809 he preached a sermon on "The Star in the East", which was said to have 'kept the minds of a large auditory in a state of most lively sensation for an hour and twenty-five minutes';⁶ and at the Annual meeting of the C.M.S. in 1810, with Wilberforce in the chair, supported

1. Considerations on Communicating the Knowledge of Christianity to the Natives of India.
See Teignmouth: Life of Teignmouth, Vol. 2, p. 140.
2. Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 155.
3. Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 2, p. 171. He left India in March, 1808.
4. Hole: Early History of C.M.S., p. 194.
5. Stock; History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p. 99.
6. Hole: Op. Cit., p. 185.

by Babington, Grant, Simeon, and Macaulay, he preached another stirring sermon on "The Light of the World" in which he referred to the previous Abolition of the Slave Trade, and urged that as one victory had just been won for humanity in Africa, so another must be won for Christianity in India.¹

THE 1813 CHARTER

Back of all this enthusiasm however was the disquieting memory of the 1793 defeat, and the knowledge that even if missionaries could be sent to India they would find the door shut in their faces. The 'Saints' did not forget, but they were crusading with a purpose; they were looking ahead. They knew that the 1793 Charter had been granted for a period of twenty years, and that in 1813 a new Charter would be granted. And in 1813 they intended to be armed with such strength that their purposes would not be lightly frustrated by a 'little tumult in the court of Proprietors'. The years of activity and publicity were awakening the public interest upon which they were relying for support; the Missionary Society had organization and influence; and, above all, they themselves had received a thorough schooling in the art of public agitation; and they were determined to battle for the Charter with the methods which had been successful in winning Abolition.

1. Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p. 100. In 1811 Buchanan published his Christian Researches in Asia, which again attracted much attention, and further stimulated interest in the East. Ibid, p. 205.

Early in 1812, therefore, they began to get into action. In February Wilberforce wrote that he was looking forward to the renewal of the Charter as to a great era when the friends of Christianity would wipe away what he had long thought 'next to the Slave Trade, the foulest blot on the moral character of our country'.¹ He felt that the cause was one for which it was 'worth while being a public man',² and was already 'busily engaged in reading, thinking, consulting, and persuading'.³ For, though he indulged a 'humble hope' that better days were ahead for India, he was 'but too well aware that if the unbiased judgement of the House of Commons were to decide the question, fatal indeed would be the issue'.⁴ But he had no intention of leaving the question to the unbiased judgement of the House of Commons. He interviewed Perceval, the Prime Minister,⁵ he wrote to Gisborne calling on him to stir up the clergy,⁶ he wrote an article for the Christian Observer.⁷ He was determined to leave no stone unturned to 'call into action the whole force of the religious world'.⁸ Susceptible as he naturally was to the rights of property, he was now willing to 'abolish the East

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 11.
2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 16.
3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 10.
4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 11.
5. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 13.
6. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 10.
7. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 12.
8. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 11.

India Company altogether' rather than not provide for India 'a passage for the entrance of light, and truth, and moral improvement and happiness'.¹

Wilberforce was not labouring alone. "We are all at work", he wrote, "about the best method of providing for the free course of religious instruction in India".²

To make definite their plans Buchanan drafted a 'Prospectus' for the proposed Episcopacy in India.³ He despatched a copy to Macaulay and Wilberforce, asking them to submit it also to Grant and Teignmouth for approval.⁴ Grant laid before the House of Commons his Observations, which made such an impression that the House ordered it to be printed.⁵ Macaulay undertook the arduous labour of preparing circulars to be broadcast throughout the country.⁶ Babington was set apart as 'the chief conspirator' detailed to organize the hundreds of petitions for which the circulars would pave the way.⁷ Grant, Babington, and Wilberforce went in a deputation to the Prime Minister to commend their purpose to his approval.⁸ And the whole brotherhood consolidated all their efforts by 'almost daily consultations' at Clapham.⁹

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 14.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 15.

3. Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 2, p. 273.

4. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 274.

5. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 324.

6. Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 247.

7. Ibid, p. 247.

8. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 16; Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 229.

9. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 294

Yet, despite the activity, and despite Wilberforce's politically arranged breakfast and dinner parties and his incessant interviewing,¹ the Saints discovered that people were not so stirred about the benighted Indians as they had been about the enslaved Negroes. "I am sadly disappointed" Wilberforce confessed, "in finding even religious people so cold about East Indian Instruction".² "I begin to despair", he added a few days later, "of much being gained for the Christian cause in the East India charter discussion".³

Though disappointed, the brotherhood did not permit any cessation of propaganda. In April, 1812, they enlisted in their campaign the forces of their Missionary Society. They arranged a Special General Meeting, which attracted about four hundred gentlemen, including many Members of -----

1. Cf. Wilberforce's diary:

"Writing to the Bishop of St. David's about East India Christianizing. Dined at Speaker's - sat next to George Holford and Leicester. Talked to former about East Indian Missions, and Buchanan. Cunningham of Lainshaw breakfasted with me to talk about getting the General Assembly of Scotland to take up the cause of Christianizing India. (N.B. The General Assembly afterwards sent to Parliament the first petition on the subject. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 300.) Dined at Lord Carrington's...I told them of Sabat's story, which they scarce believed, or about infanticide.. To town calling at Bartlett's Buildings to inquire what done about East India Company's Charter. Conference at Butterworth's till near five. Settled that the different sects should apply separately to Perceval, and to the chief members of the House of Commons, stating their deep interest - and also inform the minds of the people everywhere throughout the Country".

So run the references to the campaign in less than two pages of Wilberforce's diary. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 14-15.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 14.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 14.

Parliament, and which in its protracted course was addressed by a formidable succession of the Society's orators, including Babington, Stephen, Thornton, and Wilberforce.¹ They concluded the meeting with the Society pledged to exert itself to promote Christianity in India, and a Committee appointed to seek interviews with His Majesty's Ministers, and to use all possible means of obtaining a favourable outcome of their endeavour.²

All these preliminaries had just been paving the way for the opening of the parliamentary battle in 1813. As the time drew near therefore the friends redoubled their efforts. They knew that the struggle would be difficult, because they were aware that a great many of the Anglo-Indians genuinely believed that the introduction of Christianity would jeopardize British interests in India, and perhaps imperil British sovereignty. But the Clapham Sect had their own Anglo-Indians, and were convinced that such fears were groundless; and, at whatever risk, they were determined to remove the bar against Christianity.

Anxious therefore to commence the battle in good time, Wilberforce brought the question to parliament on

1. Christian Observer, 1812, p. 250.
Wilberforce called the meeting a "Grand assemblage", and added modestly, "I spoke with acceptance".
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 21.
2. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., pp. 213-214.
Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 283.

February 19, 1813,¹ by presenting a petition of the Scottish S.P.C.K., praying that the Charter Bill might make it legal to impart the teaching of Christianity to India.² Six days later the East India Company made their first move in parliament;³ and on March 22nd, on motion of Lord Castlereagh, the Commons went into Committee of the Whole House on the East India Company's affairs.⁴ Wilberforce, William Smith, and Stephen joined in the three hours debate trying to win adequate consideration for their purposes.⁵ But the result was not encouraging. The temper of the House was manifestly hostile.

"The truth is", Wilberforce reported, "and a dreadful truth it is, that the opinions of...a vast majority of the House of Commons would be against any motion which the friends of religion might make". "But I trust", he significantly adds, "it is very different in the body of our people; and petitions are to be promoted with a view to bring their sentiments and feelings to bear upon the opposite tenets and dispositions of the members of parliament."⁶

"The public voice alone promises something", said Buchanan in similar strain, "If every city and town in

1. In January of 1813 Josiah Pratt (the first editor of the Christian Observer) made an important departure in the campaign by commencing another magazine, The Missionary Register. The Register was designed to promote interest in Missionary endeavour, and to publish reports of all Missionary Societies then at work. Its work was very thoroughly done, and its pages are still mines of information about early labour. In its days it was an influential magazine especially in Evangelical circles, and even in its first year by entering vigorously into the Charter struggle, it helped much to win the battle. See the opinion of Sir John Kaye, in Christianity in India, p. 283.
2. Parliamentary Debates, xxiv, 654.
3. Ibid, xxiv, 659.
4. Ibid, xxv, 227.
5. Ibid, xxv, 227-256.
6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 102.

England and Scotland were to petition...the business would acquire a new complexion before the end of May."¹

The weapons which had killed the Slave Trade were the only ones which held any promise for this new fight. And the Clapham Sect turned from the disheartening prospect in parliament to gather still more strength from public agitation.

'Not a day was lost'.² Wilberforce commenced writing 'a multitude of letters', urging the correspondents in turn to bestir themselves, and organize petitions for the House of Commons.³ But, though he persevered, 'excessively busy stirring up petitions' for 'the greatest object which man ever pursued', enthusiasm lagged, and 'the spirit of petitioning' spread but slowly.⁴

1. Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 2, p. 304.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 102.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 102 et seq. To Mrs. More he wrote a long letter about denying "religious or moral light" to the East Indians. "You will agree with me" he said, "that now the Slave Trade is abolished, this is by far the greatest of our national sins.....But all this is to lead you to stir up a petition in Bristol, and any other place. (p. 103) To another friend he wrote, "You petitioned in the case of the Slave Trade, and those petitions were eminently useful; so they would be now; and what is more, having been talked of, their not coming would be highly injurious; so lose no time". (p. 105) "Can you venture", he asks a third friend, "to add your sanction to the opinion.....that our East Indian Empire is safer under the protection of Brahma with all his obsecurities and blood, than under that of God Almighty?I am persuaded, my dear friend, that you will hereafter regret your inactivity. (pp.106-107)

A constant stream of such letters from a public leader with the place and prestige of Wilberforce must have exercised no little influence in the country.

4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 107.

Further deliberation followed 'in council at Henry Thornton's',¹ and additional methods of propaganda were adopted. A great public meeting was arranged for the city of London;² and, it being 'effective', others were arranged in different parts of the country.³ Large quantities of campaign literature were distributed, Buchanan especially providing effective material.⁴

The excitement outside was interrupted by a further reverse in parliament. The House of Commons began the examination of witnesses, calling two former Governor-Generals, Warren Hastings and Lord Teignmouth.⁵ Hastings refused to commit himself about the effect of admitting missionaries to India, but resorted to the ancient evasion of the slave trade that safety would be found in delay. Lord Teignmouth rendered some help; but he was given questions purposely phrased so as to limit the effectiveness of his replies.⁶ The total gains were dubious. Commons sentiment was visibly moving toward another defeat for the Saints. In the urgency of the peril the Clapham Sect broke their cherished Sabbath rest, and for once gathered at Henry Thornton's for a 'Cabinet Council' on a Sunday afternoon.⁷ They decided that to forestall

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 108.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 108.

3. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 246.

4. Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 2, pp. 301, 310, 319.

Stock: History of the C.M.S., Vol. 1, p. 101.

Hole: Op.Cit., p. 249.

The London Times of the summer of 1813 also has a series of long letters from Buchanan.

5. Parliamentary Debates, xxv, 415-447.

6. Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 2, p. 206.

7. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 109.

disaster in the approaching examination in the House of Lords immediate action was necessary, and commissioned Wilberforce to see Lords Grenville and Wellesley, and to postpone for a while the proposed examination. Their plan succeeded. Wilberforce employed his gifts of diplomacy and soon was able to report, that the Lords had agreed 'that religion should be left out of the examination'.¹

But two months now remained to turn the scale, and the brotherhood girded their loins for the last battle. Wilberforce resumed his incessant interviewing. He even put off his Easter holidays. "I cannot spare the time now", he explained, "when it is so much needed for East Indian religion and seeing people".² Grant, Teignmouth, and Buchanan supplemented Wilberforce's interviews with their pamphlets. And, as of old, 'Cabinet Councils' at Clapham directed and co-ordinated their efforts. Wilberforce's diary has the typical comment,

"Consulting....with Grant and Stephen, and looking over the list of the House of Commons, to see whom we severally ought to speak to.....Talked over the mode of proceeding in the question in cabinet council with Grant, Babington, Stephen, and Henry Thornton."³

It must therefore have been with much anticipation that the friends waited for the 1813 Anniversary of the

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 109-112.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 113. Interviewing was Wilberforce's forte. "All had access to him, and he could enter everywhere. He was the link between the most dissimilar allies. Bishops and Baptists found in him a common term". Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 113.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 116-117.

Missionary Society, which they forthwith converted into a timely mass-meeting for their campaign. John Venn was now ill, and William Dealtry, a like-minded clergyman whom the Clapham Sect would soon choose to be Venn's successor, was taking Venn's place, and was chosen to preach the Anniversary sermon. Wilberforce, Grant, Thornton, Babington, Macaulay, and Simeon, were all there to hear and to judge.¹ Dealtry exceeded their expectations. His sermon was such as to electrify the whole congregation. It was ordered to be printed 'instantly' to add to the campaign literature.² But Dealtry's sermon was not all. Afterwards came the Annual Meeting, where doubtless the others delivered more of their glowing speeches. The results at any rate seemed to be satisfactory. "The whole Christian world seems stirred up", Simeon reported, "almost as you would expect it to be in the Millenium".³

With this aroused public opinion in their favour the Saints marshalled their forces for a renewed struggle in parliament. Even now the battle was hard fought. When the preliminary Resolutions were introduced the enemy professed themselves willing to concede an Episcopal establishment for the white residents in India, but flatly -----

1. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., pp. 264-266.

2. Ibid, p. 269.

Carus: Memoirs of Simeon, p. 364.

3. Carus: Op.Cit., p. 364.

unwilling to agree to the admission of missionaries for the natives.¹ The decisive debate came on the 22nd of June, and William Smith, Thornton, Wilberforce, and the two Charles Grants, senior and junior, all joined in advocacy of their cause.² Wilberforce in his earnestness rose once more to the level of some of his great anti-slavery speeches.³ His speech, however, did not explain the decision. Twenty years earlier he had spoken in the same place for the same cause, and had been helplessly defeated. But he now had on his side just what in his former attempt he had lacked: the militant enthusiasm of the country at large. The long agitation had served its purpose. The petitions which had been so diligently cultivated came pouring in, according to plan, from all parts of the country, so that the final appeal was supported and supplemented by eight-hundred and thirty seven petitions, bearing more than half-a million signatures.⁴ Such numbers, 'then wholly without precedent on such a subject', made an impression which could not be mistaken, and of which Wilberforce made good use in his appeal to the

1. Parliamentary Debates, xxvi, 529-563.

2. Ibid, xxvi, 827-873. Stock: History of the C.M.S., p. 104. In his speech Wilberforce used material from Grant's Observations etc., which he called a "Memoir written by a dear and honoured friend". Parliamentary Debates, xxvi, 842.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 119. "Never", said his biographers, "did he speak with greater power". "He spoke for three hours", said a hostile critic, "but nobody seemed fatigued; all indeed were pleased; some with the ingenious artifices of his manner, but most with the glowing language of his heart. Much as I differed from him in opinion, it was impossible not to be delighted with his eloquence". Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 125. Sir John Kaye says very fairly of the speech, "It was a noble piece of special pleading, not exempt from exaggeration". Kaye: Christianity in India, p. 276.

4. Missionary Register, 1813, p. 235; Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 120.

House.¹ Owing to them more than to the oratory a favourable vote was won. "Blessed be God", Wilberforce wrote hastily to his wife, "we carried our question triumphantly about three or later this morning".² "I heard afterwards", he said, "that many good men had been praying for us all night".³

Significant as this victory had been, one more battle remained to be fought. The debate had been only on the preliminary Resolutions, and an opportunity to reverse the decision might occur in the passage of the Bill itself. For the enemy 'were not disposed to yield without another struggle'.⁴ On July 12th Wilberforce wrote,

"Our opponents mean to make their utmost exertions to defeat us.....They have been working in private with more success than we had conceived possible. We must therefore meet exertion with exertion".⁵

The Saints had suffered too many defeats not to be wary to the last. But this time they need not have been apprehensive.

"The harvest now appeared ready for the sickle. The labours of those busy workmen, Grant, Teignmouth, Thornton, Wilberforce, Buchanan, and their companions, were at length to be rewarded. They had toiled and striven manfully for years; they had encountered public opposition and private ridicule; they had been shouted at by the timid and sneered at by the profane; they had been described as dangerous intermeddlers, and as imbecile fanatics. They had contended only against the open official suppression of Christianity in India; they had asked only for toleration; they had demanded that, in the midst of opposing creeds, the faith of the Christian might be suffered to walk unveiled and unfettered.

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 120.
2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 121.
3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 120.
4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 121.
5. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 299.

They had been seeking this liberty for many years; and now at last the day of emancipation was beginning to dawn upon them. The 'Clapham Sect' were victorious."¹

The victory was sealed on the final reading of the Bill, and atoned for the first defeat twenty years before. But the later scene was greatly changed. On the first occasion Charles Grant had been sitting in the gallery, watching Wilberforce go down to defeat.² Now not only was Grant with Wilberforce on the floor, but he had with him his son Charles, who gave some of the most brilliant speeches of the debate.³ Thornton was on the floor too, and Babington, and James Stephen, and, including these, nine members altogether from the ranks of the C.M.S.⁴ They were a valiant company; and they won a well-earned victory.

"The East India Bill passed", wrote Wilberforce, "and the missionary, or rather the Christian, cause fought through without division, to the last. We were often alarmed.....The petitions, of which a greater number than were ever known, have carried our question instrumentally, the good providence of God really".⁵

"To those who observe the signs of the times", he wrote again to a friend, "the prospect is very encouraging.I cannot but draw a favourable augury for the welfare of our country".⁶

But Buchanan thought of a different feature, "Now we are all likely to be disgraced", he said, "Parliament

1. Kaye: Christianity in India, pp. 257-258.

2. See Supra p.90.

3. "It must have been a fine thing to have seen the two Charles Grants - father and son - fighting side by side on the floor of the House of Commons." Kaye: Op.Cit., p. 273.

4. Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 217.

5. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 124.

6. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 125.

has opened the door, and who is there to go in? From the church not one man".¹

The Clapham Sect did not cease their missionary labours with the passing of the 1813 Charter. They failed indeed to achieve Grant's ambition, and have Brown or Buchanan made Bishop of India.² But they did find missionaries to go; and when Reginald Heber was appointed Bishop they had in him a close friend who ordained their candidates and furthered their plans. They also continued to labour for their Missionary Society, to attend Anniversaries, to make speeches, and ever generously to supply the means to make their wishes possible.

But this chapter cannot follow them further. In the 1813 battle they had won the central fight. They had not only secured an Episcopal establishment in India; they had secured the first grant for Indian education,³ and they had opened to India a door, through which all Christians of all the world could enter. The Clapham Sect had done this almost completely by themselves, with their own enthusiasm and their own resources. Even the Abolition struggle was not as exclusively theirs as was this one.

1. Pearson: Memoirs of Buchanan, Vol. 2, pp. 307-308.
2. Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 321-322. Grant had this hope in mind as far back as 1805.
3. The Bill provided for an annual grant of a lakh of rupees (£10,000) for promoting education among the natives. However, no real system of education was promoted till very much later.

Morris: Life of Grant, p. 331.

In the whole long battle hardly a name is mentioned from without their little circle. It was their wide horizons of interest, their disregard of established prejudices and vested interests, their Missionary Society, their appeal to the religious fervour of the middle classes, their skill in parliamentary tactics and public agitation, their patient, concerted, and harmonious labours, their religious passion, their indomitable courage, and their untiring persistence, which achieved what would otherwise have been thought at once imprudent to attempt and impossible to attain. And their labours in this endeavour as in others reveal their essential soundness and their far-seeing discernment. They did not labour excitedly for little things. They were governed by great purposes, and looked to great ends. They saw unmistakably while it was dim to other people that a nation dominant commercially and politically incurs obligations measured only by its loftiest principles and its most sacred heritage. And they gave their best to ensure that this principle should be built into the structure of Anglo-Indian relations. Wilberforce knew that he was finishing only the first stage, when, after the 1813 victory he wrote, "I am persuaded that we have...laid the foundation stone of the grandest edifice that ever was raised in Asia".¹

1. Correspondence of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 271.

Chapter Four

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN MOVEMENTS FOR POPULAR EDUCATION, AND IN TRACT AND BIBLE SOCIETIES.

In common with all other Missionary Societies existing at the time, the Missionary Society in which the Clapham Sect had taken so much interest was a great deal indebted to another society which has already been mentioned, the British and Foreign Bible Society. But an inquiry into the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society leads again to the plans and councils of the Clapham Sect. The Bible Society, however, is one of a long series of efforts to promote education and circulate good literature. And it will be well, as a preliminary, to consider some of the forerunning endeavours..

POPULAR EDUCATION

The latter years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth witnessed a notable advance in popular education - an advance to which, in the early stages, the most significant contribution was made by the institution of the Sunday School. Sunday Schools were not then a new idea. Luther had formed them in Germany, Cardinal Borromeo, in the seventeenth century, had formed them in Milan, John Wesley had organized one in his parish in

Georgia,¹ and numerous other leaders had made other tentative experiments. But when, in 1780, Robert Raikes opened his school in Sooty Alley, he was the first to make the movement a practical success. In a few months Wesley was reporting, "I find these schools springing up wherever I go".² Five years later the idea had so grown that a group of friends formed the first Sunday School Association to promote the organization of schools, and to provide the necessary funds.³ Within two years this Association - of whom one of the leading spirits was Henry Thornton, and two of the supporters were Granville Sharp and Hannah More⁴ - organized two hundred schools; and by that time, 1787, the total number of Sunday School scholars in England was 250,000.⁵

The Sunday Schools undertook as one of their primary obligations to teach the hitherto illiterate masses to read. They were conducted largely by Wesleyan Societies, or by Evangelical clergymen,⁶ fired by the Evangelical belief that 'the free study of God's word was the proudest heritage of Englishmen'. 'Purely religious motives'⁷ therefore stimulated a widespread increase in literacy, and

1. Balleine, History of the Evangelical Party, pp. 139-140.

2. Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 44.

3. Plan of a Society, est. 1785, for support..of Sunday Schools.

4. Ibid. & G.W.E.Russell, Collections and Recollections, p. 93.

5. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 88.

6. Overton: Evangelical Revival in the 18th Century, p. 133.

7. Raven: Christian Socialism, p. 15

brought, as Green said, 'the beginnings of popular education'.¹

But the England after Burke's Reflections had small enthusiasm for popular education. Even 'good churchmen' looked askance at the idea, and referred darkly to the happenings across the Channel. The leading Bishop of the day declared that there was 'much ground for suspicion that sedition and atheism were the real objects of some of these institutions'.² The Scottish General Assembly was moved to issue a 'Pastoral Admonition' which inveighed against the teachers of Sunday Schools, and warned that there was good reason to fear that their labours were 'a cover for secret democracy and liberty'.³ It is said that the Pitt Cabinet seriously contemplated a Bill to suppress Sunday Schools altogether;⁴ and certainly, as late as 1819, Cheshire magistrates desired Sunday Schools to be forbidden.⁵ When Mrs. Hannah More commenced in Cheddar the work to which reference must shortly be made, she met prolonged opposition. One farmer said that it was preordained that servants should be -----

1. Green: History of the English People, Vol. 4, p. 274.
2. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 142. ⁴
To Bishop Horsley's charge Rowland Hill replied, "Respecting the little army we are about to raise to overthrow the King and constitution, it should be considered that the children in these schools of sedition are, on the average, only from six to twelve years of age; consequently they will not be able to take the field for at least ten years; and, half of these being girls, unless we raise an army of Amazons, with a virago Joan at the head of them, we shall be sadly short of soldiers to accomplish the design." Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 59.
Despite the cleverness of the reply these children made the next generation a different generation from that of their fathers.
3. Mathieson: Church and Reform in Scotland, pp. 86-87.
4. Balleine: Op.Cit., p. 142.
5. Hammond: The Town Labourer, p. 93.

ignorant, and that it was a shame to alter the decrees of God; another that he did not want his ploughmen wiser than he himself, 'he did not want saints but workmen'. And on the day when the first school opened another landowner exclaimed with alarm that it was 'all over with property; if property is not to rule what is to become of us?'¹

Needless to say those who originated the Sunday Schools were not revolutionary, any more than even those who fought for Abolition. But it is a commentary on their position that in venturing on these labours they were undertaking what contemporary Right Wing opinion considered as dangerous radicalism. Moreover the critics were the more nearly correct. The immediate motive of many of the Sunday Schools may have been partly to teach contentment; but the ultimate results were wider. The doctrine of contentment was accompanied by the ability to read. In the long run 'by giving to workers that...possibility of concerted action which only education can bestow' the Sunday Schools were 'unwittingly promoting the very revolution they wished to resist'.²

The most notable Sunday School work in which any of the

1. More: The Mendip Annals, pp. 208, 210, 212.

2. Raven: Christian Socialism, p. 15.

The Sunday Schools in the beginning were often illiberal enough. While reading was taught writing was often forbidden. Mrs. Hannah More's scheme was as narrow as could well be imagined. The son of a farmer might be taught the 'beneficial and appropriate knowledge for a boy of this class', but the children of labourers must be given 'no writing'; nor any reading but the Bible, catechism, and 'such little tracts as may enable them to understand the Church service'.

Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 60.

Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 100.

The importance of the Sunday Schools however was that they did teach people to read; and by creating literacy paved the way for democracy.

Clapham Sect engaged was that directed, and largely financed, by Wilberforce and Thornton and conducted by Mrs. Hannah More at Cheddar.¹ In 1789 Wilberforce while on a visit to Mrs. Hannah More was disturbed by the poverty and brutality of the neighbouring villagers. He induced Mrs. More to make some effort for the welfare of the villagers, and promised the support of himself and Henry Thornton. The labours subsequently undertaken at Mendip and the neighbouring country included many schemes for moral and material improvement, but chief among them was the establishment of Sunday Schools. In a short time the More sisters had gathered upwards of five hundred children in their various schools, and they continued their organization until they had established schools over an area of seventy-five square miles, and could gather at their festivals as many as thirteen hundred children.

Sunday School activity, however, was not confined to Wilberforce and Thornton. Most of the individual labours are probably unrecorded; but Zachary Macaulay is mentioned as one of the earliest supporters of Sunday Schools;² Babington was ~~himself~~ in his youth a Sunday School teacher;³ and Grant, says the Dictionary of National Biography, introduced the Sunday School into Scotland, personally supported

1. A full account of this work is contained in the Mendip Annals. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, pp. 239-241. Harford: Recollections of Wilberforce, p. 270. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, pp. 95-96, 105, 123. Henry Thornton used to give £600 per year to the scheme. D.N.B. Article, H. Thornton.
2. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 800.
3. Ibid, 1838, p. 130. Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, pp. 215-216.

two schools for twenty years, and for a long time himself acted as teacher.¹

The Clapham Sect were interested not only in Sunday Schools; they were enthusiastic in the support of all movements for education. Wilberforce and his friends were the first to plan between 1802-1804 an Anglican scheme of primary education, of which they seem to have been thinking as early as 1798; but their scheme was squeezed out between the other schemes which arose about that time.² John Venn was one of the first clergymen to introduce parish schools.³ He boasted before his death that every child in Clapham Parish could be gratuitously taught to read, that every family could be supplied with a Bible, and that every inhabitant could find accommodation to worship God.⁴ At Clapham, indeed, there were maintained by private benevolence no less than six schools for poor children.⁵ In addition Henry Thornton supported schools at Southwark⁶ and Wilberforce others at Sandgate and the 'two towns adjoining'.⁷ Babington wrote a treatise on Christian Education which had some little vogue.⁸ And in the colony at Sierra Leone Macaulay laboured to achieve universal education.

1. D.N.B. Art. Charles Grant. Smith: Twelve Indian Statesmen, p. 21.
2. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 464. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 309.
3. & 4. Venn Family Annals, p. 135. Christian Observer, 1815, p. 28.
5. Rudolf: Clapham and the Clapham Sect, p. 90.
6. Ibid, p. 109. Thornton also gave £600 per year to Mrs. More's schools. His father John Thornton also gave munificently to Education and founded a college in America even during the Revolutionary war. Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 258.
7. Christian Observer, 1838, p. 576. Correspondence of W. Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 270.
8. Colquhoun: Op.Cit., p. 223.

He established there schools for children which achieved an attendance of three hundred, and night schools for adults which attracted large numbers.¹ After returning to England he befriended and assisted Joseph Lancaster, but with equal liberality also gave his support, and the support of the Christian Observer, to Andrew Bell.² Wilberforce also aided and supported both these men, and Stephen supported Bell.³ Grant originated at Haileybury a college for the training of Indian civil servants,⁴ and Macaulay was an eager advocate for London University, and when it was established, sat on its first Council.⁵

In short the Clapham Sect were enthusiasts for popular education. They had no hope for a civilization of ignorant citizens. Wilberforce expressed their opinion when in 1819 pleading in the House of Commons for education of the poor, he declared that 'if people were destined to be free, they must be made fit to enjoy their freedom'.⁶ Neither he nor any of the others foresaw what that freedom would mean; but in their constant support of education they

1. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 762.

2. Ibid, 1839, p. 800.

Lancaster's efforts gave rise to the Royal Lancasterian Society which in 1814 was succeeded by the British and Foreign School Society. Bell's effort gave rise in 1811 to the National Schools Society. Broadly speaking the National Society was Church and the British and Foreign Schools Society was Non-Conformist, though many churchmen such as Wilberforce and Macaulay supported both.

Overton: English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 238.

3. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 498.

4. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 246.

5. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 434.

6. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 427.

builded better than they knew.¹

CHEAP LITERATURE

Their eagerness for education did not, however, make them insensitive to objections of their opponents that people who could read the Bible could also read seditious and subversive literature.² The Clapham Sect were as little anxious as any Tory squire to see the popular appetite being fed with such nutriment. But they attacked the problem from a better angle. They put their faith not in the preservation of ignorance, but in the production of good literature to satisfy the demand which education would create. And in this, as in other labours, they were led into distant reaches which in the beginning they in no wise anticipated.

1. It may be remarked that many of the later movements for secular education were as suspect as the earlier Sunday schools. Pitt, who had been content to leave the country entirely without education, wrote in 1802 that he was strongly persuaded that Mr. Lancaster's project if allowed to operate was likely to produce mischief, and that it was necessary to find a safe substitute.
 Rose: Pitt and Napoleon, p. 110.
2. Giddy, a President of the Royal Society, said in the House of Commons in 1807, "However specious in theory the project might be, of giving education to the labouring classes...it would teach them to despise their lot in life...it would render them factious and refractory,....it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and in a few years the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrate with more vigorous laws than were now in force."
 Parliamentary Debates, ix. 798-799.
 It was against such a spirit that the early advocates of popular education made slow headway. Even Cobbett thought that the demand for popular education was 'despicable cant and nonsense'.
 Mathieson: English in Transition, p. 150.

The first literary crusade of the company, however, had been undertaken for the benefit not of the poor but of the rich. In 1788 Hannah More had produced her first 'methodical battery on vice and error' in her Thoughts on the Manners of the Great.¹ The 'great', she thought, set the standard. "To expect to reform the poor", she remarked, "while the opulent are corrupt, is to throw odours into the stream, while the springs are poisoned".² In 1790 she followed this publication with a second: An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World.³ Both books were widely read. The former sold seven large editions in a few months, and the latter five editions in two years. And in consequence the 'manners of the great' were said to have been 'materially improved'.⁴

Hannah More's efforts were followed by a much more powerful blast from Wilberforce himself. Early after his conversion Wilberforce began to form the idea of delivering to the world his 'religious manifesto'; and in August, 1793, he 'laid the first timbers'.⁵ of his proposed treatise. But, save on holiday visits to Gisborne and Babington, he could find little time to work at it, and he used to read over the parts with the brotherhood to get their criticism and council.⁶ So he made slow progress, and did not have the book ready for the press till April 1797.⁷ Even then

1. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 79.

2. Ibid, p. 80.

3. Ibid, p. 127.

4. Overton: The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century, p. 127.

5. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 33.

6. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 61 Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 500.

7. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 199 & 205.

the publisher was not anxious to take it, for, though the wit and brilliance of Mrs. Hannah More might create sales, religious works in general had then but a poor audience. As Wilberforce intended to put his name to the book a venture was made of five hundred copies. Seventy-five hundred copies sold within six months. And the popularity 'at that time without precedent' increased with the years. By 1826 fifteen editions had been issued in England and twenty-five in America, and translations had been made into French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and German.¹

The brotherhood as they watched the first success were delighted. Thornton immediately sent a copy to young Macaulay in Africa; and John Newton wrote to Grant that the book would be a means 'of reviving and strengthening the sense of real religion where it already is, and of communicating it where it is not'.² Even later and less prejudiced writers agreed that its influence was great. Philip Anthony Brown says that it marked the beginning of practical influence of Evangelicalism among the upper classes.³

The Clapham Sect did not end their labours with the production of literature for the fashionable world. They had also 'strongly felt the need for literature suitable for circulation among the lower middle and labouring classes, and

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 205. The title was A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country contrasted with Real Christianity.
2. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 201.
3. P.A.Brown: French Revolution in English History, p. 179.

had given the matter much anxious consideration'.¹ The lead was again taken by Mrs. Hannah More, who in the preface to the later collected works explained what she attempted to do:

"As an appetite for reading had been increasing among the inferior ranks, it was judged expedient to provide such wholesome aliment as might give new direction to the public taste, and abate a relish for those corrupt and impious publications which the consequences of the French Revolution have been fatally pouring in on us".²

The first effort was the publication of a pamphlet, Village Politics by Will Chip, of which the crisp and homely philosophy caught the fancy of the poorer classes, as the previous works had caught the fancy of the educated. The tract sold by thousands, and thousands more were purchased by the wealthy, and even by the government, and distributed gratis.³ Everywhere it was enormously popular, and its success brought a revelation of how powerful a weapon the cheap tract might be. Mrs. More, aided by her sister and some others, among whom Henry Thornton was a principal figure, thereupon decided to issue a regular series of similar tracts, every month 'a tale, a ballad, and a tract for Sunday reading'.⁴ These were stored in certain selected shops or 'repositories', and so were called the Cheap Repository Tracts.⁵ As they were designed to supplant 'the infidel and Jacobinical trash'⁶ then popular

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 129.

2. Ibid, p. 130.

3. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, pp. 135-136.

4. Ibid, p. 151.

5. Notes and Queries, Third Series, Vol. 6, p. 242.

6. Thompson: Op.Cit., p. 152.

in England, they were sold at a penny apiece, some even at a half-penny.¹ Such a price could be maintained only by a liberal subsidy; but Henry Thornton seems to have taken that duty as his own.²

The success of the venture was unprecedented. Nearly two million tracts were sold in the first year.³ The finances consequently grew beyond Thornton's capacity; but, to maintain the publication, he organized an Association, of which he remained the treasurer.⁴

1. Notes and Queries, Third Series, Vol. 6, p. 243.

2. Ibid, Third Series, Vol. 6, p. 242.

3. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 153.

The use of the tract as a method of propaganda was not new to England at this period. Puritanism had 'spawned pamphlets'. The S.P.C.K., founded in 1799, had promoted the circulation of religious tracts and books. The Society for Diffusing Religious Knowledge among the Poor, formed in 1750, had united Anglicans and Non-Conformists in a similar endeavour. John Wesley had set the example for the Evangelical school by circulating tracts in multitudes. His Journal of Dec. 18, 1745 notes: "We had within a short time given away some thousands of little tracts among the common people...and this day An Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance was given at every church door in or near London to every person who came out...I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith!" In 1782 Wesley established The Society for the Distribution of Religious Tracts among the Poor. The Clapham Sect too had had previous experience with the circulation of tracts for the Society for the Reformation of Manners that Wilberforce had established in 1787 had undertaken as one of its duties the distribution of tracts, and so was the precursor of Hannah More's endeavours. But all these efforts were spasmodic and ephemeral compared with the Cheap Repository Tracts and the Religious Tract Society which were now instituted.

Cole: Politics and Literature, p. 73.

Cornish: A History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 36.

Warner: The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution, p. 232.

Green: History of the Religious Tract Society, pp. 1-2.

Overton: The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 134-135.

4. Notes and Queries, Third Series, Vol. 6, p. 242.

The Clapham Sect naturally hailed the scheme with pleasure, and assisted with pens and purses.¹ Unfortunately there are no clear records of the venture; but Thornton himself is said to have written tracts as well as to have provided money,² and John Venn lists three of the tracts as his production.³ Typical Clapham enthusiasm was also given to the distribution of the tracts. At that time pedlars largely supplied the literary needs of the country districts. Clapham was quick to realize the possibilities of the pedlar. In 1796 Mrs. More wrote to Macaulay, then in Africa,

"Mr. Henry Thornton, and two or three others, have condescended to spend hours with the hawkers to learn the mysteries of their trade, and next month we hope to meet the hawkers on their own ground".⁴

With the sparkle and brilliance of Mrs. More, and the diligence of Thornton and his helpers, the tracts continued both to be written and to be circulated until they were familiar in every part of England, and formed the 'principal part of many an English cottager's library.'⁵ In 1798 however the constant strain of production proved too much for the principal contributor, Mrs. Hannah More, and the series was brought to an end.⁶ But the phenomenal success had revealed in an extraordinary way how eager and -----

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 129.

2. Colquhoun: W. Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 123.

3. Venn Family Annals, p. 140.

4. Knutsford: Op.Cit., p. 129.

5. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 150.

6. Ibid, p. 163.

how wide a market was now ready for cheap religious literature; and that knowledge was in turn to lead to further experiments in which the Clapham Sect were once more to find their interests centred.

Just how much direct connection the Cheap Repository experiment had with the formation of the Religious Tract Society is now impossible to determine. Tradition has always confidently affirmed that the one gave birth to the other. The first Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society maintains as much.¹ And many writers, with how much knowledge one is not sure, have added their confirmation. Lady Knutsford says that the Religious Tract Society grew naturally 'out of the great success which had attended upon the distribution of the Cheap Repository Tracts'.² Balleine says that the Religious Tract Society 'was founded to develop the work that Hannah More had begun';³ and the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics adds confirmation to this opinion.⁴ One thing is certain: the amazing success of the Cheap Repository Tracts was not unknown to the men who, one year after the Repository series had ended, followed with the idea of a Religious Tract Society.⁵

1. Notes and Queries, Third Series, Vol. 6, pp. 241-242.

2. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 236.

3. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 166.

4. E.R.E. Article, Sects.

5. There is an account of the founding of the R.T.S. in Green: History of the Religious Tract Society. Opening pages.

The Clapham Sect, however, had no direct connection with the founding of the Religious Tract Society. At the time of its birth they were occupied with the formation of their Missionary Society, which was founded just one month later.¹ Yet they must have been fully conversant with the proceedings of the Tract Society, for one of their neighbours and intimate friends, Joseph Hughes, Baptist minister of Battersea, was an eager supporter of the Society, and was elected honorary secretary.² And within a year they had within the society's ranks a 'member for Clapham',³ Zachary Macaulay, who forthwith took 'an active interest' in the Society's work, became the means of providing thousands of Bibles for the French prisoners of war then in England,⁴ and in a few months was travelling on the continent to gather data on the possibilities of expanding the work abroad.⁵ The Clapham company, therefore, would be watching with sympathy this further experiment in the circulation of tracts,⁶ and

1. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 166.
 2. Green: History of the Religious Tract Society, p. 5.
 3. Balleine: Op.Cit., p. 166.
 4. Green: History of the Religious Tract Society, p. 14.
 5. Ibid. & Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 237.
 6. Indirectly Clapham gave a great deal to the Religious Tract Society, for Wilberforce's Practical View had converted Legh Richmond, who became the Society's most popular writer. Richmond's works rivalled those of Hannah More in their popular appeal. He sold two million copies of one tract, The Dairyman's Daughter, and five million copies of his works during his lifetime. Moreover Wilberforce's influence did not end with Legh Richmond. The matter and style of his Practical View became 'a guide and inspiration to many tract writers', and 'the influence of its stirring appeals' may be traced in many early publications of the R.T.S.
- D.N.B. Art. Legh Richmond & Green: History of the R.T.S., pp. 10-13.

hence the more ready to lend their aid when, in 1804, the Tract Society began its greater development.¹

THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER

While the Religious Tract Society was struggling to its feet the Clapham Sect were occupied with another scheme of a different nature. They were undertaking to establish not a series of isolated tracts, but a regular magazine, under their own control, and devoted to their own views, and to the defence of their causes. They had long felt the need of such an auxiliary in their campaigns. In 1780 the preface to Wesley's Arminian Magazine had made a surprising reference to 'the number of magazines which now swarm in the world'.² But, however the scanty supply may have impressed the people of the times, the Clapham Sect, engaged in so many crusades, found that the number on which they could rely for satisfactory support was very small indeed. Of the more acceptable the Monthly Review was Whig in politics and Non-Conformist in religion; the Critical Review and the British Critic were dull and heavy and high church; and the Evangelical Magazine, under mixed management, was weak in public, social, and literary material.

1. The Eclectic Society had been stirred by the success of Mrs. More's tracts, and had held a discussion on the possibility of establishing a tract Society. Tentative beginnings were actually made, the Rev. Thomas Scott attempting to produce the literature. But the venture was not sustained, the Eclectics probably finding in the Religious Tract Society a sufficient outlet for their purposes. Pratt: Eclectic Notes, pp. 12-15.
2. Arminian Magazine. 1780. Preface.

The friends therefore began to speculate about establishing a magazine in which their position would be more satisfactorily represented. They had been considering the possibility as early as 1798. On July 28th of that year Wilberforce reported that he and Babington went over to Thornton's 'to talk over the matter of the Magazine and its editor'.¹ At that time indeed their ambition did not extend beyond the modest hope that the magazine might admit 'a moderate degree of political and common intelligence'.² But their hope if modest was persistent. Thereafter Wilberforce 'was constantly in communication about the project with Babington and Henry Thornton, and they also discussed the matter in all its bearing with other friends.'³ And Zachary Macaulay on his long walks to and fro from Clapham used to meditate on the potentialities of a periodical which 'should counteract the evils existing...in the religious world and at the same time recommend religion to the consciences of the worldly'.⁴

In 1799 the proposal had assumed such interest that Josiah Pratt, after the usual manner carrying Clapham projects for discussion in the Eclectic Society, proposed there for discussion the question, "How far might a periodical publication be rendered subservient to the interests

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 308.

2. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 308.

3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 250.

4. Ibid, p. 235.

of religion?"¹ Unfortunately no notes of the discussion have been preserved.² Toward the end of the same year however the Saints decided to publish a Prospectus,³ which they commissioned John Venn to prepare, and which made formal announcement of the intention to produce

"an interesting review of religion, literature, and politics, as a clergyman may without scruple recommend to his parishioners, and a Christian safely introduce into his family".⁴

Following moves came slowly. A Governing Committee were selected, which consisted of seven members, of whom six were Wilberforce, Macaulay, Venn, Grant, Thornton, and Josiah Pratt.⁵ Of these Thornton provided the funds to establish the paper,⁶ and Pratt was appointed editor.⁷ Next the friends decided to take an important departure from contemporary custom. Magazines had been expensive. The cheapest then published was the British Critic at half-a-crown. But the Clapham Sect were wise enough to profit by past experience, and in January, 1802 they boldly introduced to the public, the Christian Observer, at one shilling.⁸

1. Eclectic Notes, p. 93.

2. Ibid, p. 93.

3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 251-252.

4. Venn Family Annals, p. 135; Christian Observer, prefix to first volume.

5. Knutsford: Op.Cit., p. 252 & Eclectic Notes, p. 94.

6. Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 152.

7. Pratt: Memoirs of Pratt, p. 11.

8. Balleine: Op.Cit., p. 153.

Wilberforce's sons make another of their not infrequent errors when they say (Vol. 2, p. 309)- that the Christian Observer was first published in January, 1801.

All the friends were hearty supporters of their magazine, and contributed liberally to it. Before his death in 1815 Thornton published in it no less than eighty-three articles.¹ But Macaulay, as ever, shouldered the heaviest burden. After a few months Pratt resigned the editorship, and the Sect, calling one of their accustomed Cabinet Councils, decided to pass the job to Macaulay.² Macaulay accepted the task and for fourteen years added to all the other tasks that fell to him the laborious duties of an editor.³ He largely determined the policies of the Observer, wrote constantly for it himself, and persuaded others to write, 'whom no one else but he could have persuaded'.⁴

In a short time the Christian Observer was securely established, and, despite occasional fears,⁵ proved

1. Morris: Founders of the Bible Society, p. 65.
Unfortunately it is not now possible to determine all the contributions of the Clapham Sect, though from references one gathers that they must have been many. Macaulay intended before his death to make a list of all the articles that the brotherhood had written, but was prevented by illness from fulfilling his purpose.
Christian Observer, 1838, p. 405.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 43.
3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 332.
4. Overton: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 71.
5. In the fall of 1802 Wilberforce and Thornton each wrote an appeal to Mrs. Hannah More to lend her pen to the aid of the Observer. "My idea is", said Wilberforce, "that you should write some religious and moral novels, stories, tales, call 'em what you will...The Cheap Repository tales, a little raised in their subjects, are the very things I want". Wilberforce thought that if he and Mrs. More worked together they could "greatly raise the character and increase the utility of the work". "The truth is", he confessed, "it is heavy, and...if it be not enlivened it will sink". In reply Mrs. More admitted that though the Observer was a "valuable miscellany", yet "it needed a little essential salt". But the fears were unnecessary, and the Christian Observer continued its popularity till long after all the original founders passed away. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 67-68. & Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 257.

a lasting success,¹ and for a generation was a stable institution in Evangelical circles.

It is important to remember that in 1802 the Abolition of the slave trade had not yet been achieved, the Missionary Society had not properly got under way, the second struggle over the Indian Charter had not yet commenced, the British and Foreign Bible Society was not yet founded, and the long campaign for emancipation was -----

1. Anyone who may think that a magazine in the hands of the Clapham Sect would be dull and unimportant would do well to read the following letter, written by Lord Byron, in no wise one of their admirers, after their review of his Giaour:

December 3, 1813.

Sir:

I have just finished the perusal of an article in the Christian Observer on the 'Giaour'. You perhaps are unacquainted with the writer, and at all events I have no business to inquire. I only wish you would have the goodness to thank him very sincerely on my part for the pleasure (I do not say unmixed pleasure) which the perusal of a very able, and I believe just criticism has afforded me. Of course I cannot be an impartial witness of its justice, but it is something in its favour when the author criticized does not complain of its sentence. This is not affectation; if I felt angry I could not conceal it even from others, and contempt can only be bestowed on the weak, amongst whom the writer of this article has certainly no place.

I shall merely add that this is the first notice I have for some years taken of any public criticism, good or bad, in the way of either thanks or defence, and I trust that yourself and the writer will not attribute to any unworthy motive my deviating for once from my usual custom to express myself obliged to him.

I have the honour to be very sincerely your most obedient humble servant.

Byron.

P.S. I cannot fold this without congratulating you on the acquisition of a writer in your valuable journal whose style and powers are so far above the generality of writers as the author of the remarks to which I have alluded.

Christian Observer, 1813, p. 731.

still far in the future. It may easily be seen, therefore, how important it was for the Clapham Sect that thus early they forged for themselves so powerful a weapon. Hereafter on the first of every month they had the ear of a large section of the religious public of the middle class, and thereby were enabled, as they could not otherwise have done, to win a favorable hearing for their many causes.

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY

The Christian Observer was hardly under way when the turn of events attracted Clapham once more to the Religious Tract Society. It will be well to pick up the threads from the earlier effort.

On December 7th, 1802, the Committee of the Tract Society were addressed by a visitor, the Rev. Thomas Charles, a Methodist minister from Wales. Mr. Charles told the committee of the distressing scarcity of Bibles in Wales, and suggested that to supply the need another Society might be formed, similar to the Tract Society. His earnestness and enthusiasm made a deep impression on the committee and one of them, Mr. Hughes, the Baptist minister of Battersea, exclaimed, "Surely a society might be formed for the purpose; and if for Wales, why not for the Kingdom; why not for the whole world?"¹

1. Canton: History of the British & Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 10.

The committee were so taken with the idea that they followed up their meeting with a series of others¹ to explore the possibilities of such an endeavour. But they had not proceeded very far before they felt that the success of such an undertaking would require the aid of outside experience, and of other men whose rank and influence would gain the patronage that was necessary properly to establish the Society.

'Their eyes very naturally turned towards the suburbs of Clapham'.² And when, on February 8th, they boldly resolved to make application to His Majesty for his patronage of the proposed Society, they immediately decided that Mr. Hardcastle³ and Mr. Hughes should visit Mr. Wilberforce 'relative to the above application'.⁴ But it seems that the delegates chose an indirect method. They first approached Grant, and went with him to a breakfast at Wilberforce's, where they further broached their scheme to Wilberforce himself.⁵

1. Unfortunately the early minutes of the Religious Tract Society have not been preserved. The only MSS now at the Bible House, consist of a few pages copied from the minutes of the R.T.S. Committee, and covering the meetings which led to the formation of the B & F Bible Society. These minutes seemed to have been copied by Henry Morris in preparation for his booklet "A Memorable Room". Morris' name is signed to them, and they are marked "Manuscripts from R.T.S. Minutes. 19 j '96". It is from these MSS that the following references to the Committee meetings are made. There is, of course, no way of determining if the minutes of all the meetings have been copied; but these seem to be all that later writers have been able to discover. Cf. Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 2, pp. 457-460.
2. Morris: Founders....of the Bible Society, p. 31.
3. Mr. Hardcastle was a well-known business man, also a resident of Clapham. Paxton Hood: Vignettes of the Great Revival, p. 156.
4. Bible House MSS. of the Religious Tract Society
5. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 91.

However introduced, such a scheme was sure of a favourable reception at Clapham, for Clapham already had Bible Societies of its own. John Thornton in his lifetime had given away 'immense quantities of Bibles and religious books in all parts of the world, and printed many at his own expense'.¹ He also, in 1780, at the time of the Gordon riots, was largely instrumental in establishing the earliest of the Bible Societies, designed especially to serve soldiers and sailors.² Henry Thornton, following in his father's footsteps, became 'a very Bible Society in himself', and spent as much as £2000 a year in distributing Bibles.³ Moreover, the first Sunday School Society, in which Henry Thornton had so large an influence, made the distribution of Bibles and Testaments a regular part of its duties.⁴ Hannah More in her labours annually gave away about 'two hundred Bibles, common prayer books, and Testaments'.⁵ And for years Wilberforce had been distributing Bibles through his friends in the ministry.⁶

1. D.N.B. Article Henry Thornton.

2. Proceedings of the Naval and Military Bible Society 1875, (with an account of its origin.). Before the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded, this Society had circulated 30,000 Bibles. At its formation the Society was called simply the Bible Society. But - as it confined its labours to soldiers and sailors - its name was changed, after the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to The Naval and Military Bible Society. The first ship among whose crew this Society distributed the scriptures was The Royal George, which had 400 of the Society's Bibles on board, when on August 29, 1792 it went down at Spithead, "With twice four hundred men".

Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 3.

3. Paxton Hood: Vignettes of the Great Revival, p. 155.

4. Owen: Origin of the Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 23.

5. Thompson: Life of Hannah More, p. 101.

6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 91.

A good reception at Clapham was therefore predicted for a central society, which should 'combine....the scattered energies of all professing Christians; and so create a mighty instrument for the circulation of the truth'.¹ And it is not surprising that a short while after the first appeal to him, Wilberforce should have been present at a meeting of the Committee, nor that 'chiefly at the suggestion of Mr. Wilberforce'² the committee should that morning, in true Clapham fashion, decide to make a preliminary survey to determine the actual scarcity of Bibles 'in this and other countries', and, so, to gather accurate information on which to proceed.³ Yet for a while Wilber-

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 90-91.

2. Green: Story of the Religious Tract Society, p. 22.

3. Morris: Founders...of the Bible Society, p. 45.

MSS of minutes of the R.T.S. Committee, April 21, 1803.

This meeting is important because the comment on it in Wilberforce's Life has led many to think that the Bible Society was founded then, and chiefly by Mr. Wilberforce. The account as recalled by Wilberforce's sons is as follows: "A few of us met together at Mr. Hardcastle's counting-house,...on so dark a morning that we discussed by candle-light while we resolved upon the establishment of the Bible Society". Even Coupland presumably following this account says "The British and Foreign Society was largely (Wilberforce's) creation". Both accounts are quite inaccurate. The meeting referred to was one of a series, - of which the minutes of thirty are preserved, - extending over two years. The project had now been discussed for four months, and the Committee were disappointed with the meagre results of the meeting. Wilberforce was for a long time unenthusiastic, and the Society would have been established, if he had had nothing to do with it. What Wilberforce did was to lend to the Society his influence and patronage, and hence earn for it attention and support which greatly widened its possibilities.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 91.

Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 376.

Morris: Founders...of the Bible Society, p. 45.

force seems to have been a little dubious about the possibilities of the Society, and only gradually did he and his friends come to see how admirably it was suited to meet their ideas and to supplement their labours.¹

The Committee continued to hold meetings, and gradually to work towards a settled policy. Slowly it made progress. On January 10, 1804, after several less happy suggestions, it selected as the name of the society The British and Foreign Bible Society. Meanwhile by letter it was keeping in touch with Wilberforce, who suggested a public meeting to establish the Society. The Committee followed his suggestion and issued an announcement, signed by Granville Sharp and a number of others, calling a public meeting to inaugurate the Society.²

At this meeting, on March 7, 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was formally established. Granville Sharp was in the chair,³ and Clapham gathered its ranks to his support. From this time all uncertainty was ended. The Clapham Sect unmistakably took the Society under their aegis. Babington, Charles Grant, Zachary Macaulay, Gran-

1. Henry Morris: A Memorable Room, p. 7.
2. MSS Minutes of the R.T.S. Jan. 17, 1804, Jan. 26, 1804. Granville Sharp's name was placed at the top of the list, all the others were set in alphabetical order. The notice is printed in Owen: Origin of the...British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, pp. 34-36.
3. Granville Sharp was so averse to taking a place of distinction that though he attended the Committee on the Abolition of the Slave Trade for twenty years, and though appointed chairman, he never once acted as chairman. But he had become so interested in the Bible Society that he now consented.

Clarkson: History of Abolition, Vol. 1, p. 449.
 Owen: Origin of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 42.

ville Sharp, James Stephen, and William Wilberforce, were all included in the appointed committee,¹ Henry Thornton was selected for his accustomed job of treasurer,² and of the three secretaries chosen two were those close friends of the Sect, Joseph Hughes and Josiah Pratt.³

The committee soon got into action and a general meeting of the subscribers and friends of the institution was advertised for the 2nd of May, 1804. Zachary Macaulay, 'an active, judicious, and most useful Member of the Committee' as Owen describes him, had solicited Lord Teignmouth - hitherto unconnected with the Society, although he had been 'among the earliest in the list of contributors' - to act as chairman.⁴ But Teignmouth was ill, and for the second time Granville Sharp performed the duties 'with his characteristic urbanity and attention'.⁵ At the close Wilberforce 'added much to the interest of the day' by 'a speech of equal animation and judgement'.⁶ His oratory 'produced...a very sensible effect; and the meeting

1. Owen: Origin of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 63.
2. Owen: Op. Cit. Vol. 1, p. 63. Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 13. Their names are commemorated with those of the other members of the Committee on a plaque at the entrance to the present Bible House in London.
3. Charles Elliott later joined his friends on the Committee; and Sharp, Dealtry, and Gisborne were made honorary Life-Governors. Josiah Pratt soon resigned and was succeeded by John Owen who was author of the History of the Society and whose daughter married one of the sons of Wilberforce. Canton: Op.Cit. Vol. 1, p. 312. Vol. 2, p. 463. Owen: Op.Cit., Vol. 1. p. 60.
4. Owen: Op.Cit., Vol. 1, p. 61.
5. Ibid; Vol. 1, p. 61.
6. Ibid; Vol. 1, p. 61.

separated, with an increased conviction of the excellence of their cause, and a confirmed resolution to unite with their zeal in the prosecution of its interests that discretion which had been so opportunely and impressively recommended.¹

This meeting was designed to win public favour. Further to obtain countenance the Committee now proceeded

'to look out for such patronage as might shield their undertaking from the charge of insignificance, and stamp it with the recommendatory sanction of some high and honourable name'.²

After some consultation the Committee pronounced its 'unanimous judgement' in favour of Lord Teignmouth as most 'worthy to preside over the British and Foreign Bible Society'.³ Shortly afterward Wilberforce and Grant were both elected to the office of Vice-President,⁴ and with a few other, these

'together with the late Henry Thornton...filled up those stations, which....determined the character and fixed the respectability of the Institution'.⁵

Having launched the Bible Society, this chapter cannot follow further its history and fortunes, and its continued associations with the Clapham Sect. The pages of Wilberforce's diary, the records of the other members, and the histories of the Society tell how constant were

1. Owen: Origin....of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 62.
2. Ibid: Vol. 1, p. 66.
3. Ibid: Vol. 1, pp. 68-69.
4. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 71.
5. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 71.

the Clapham labours,¹ and how significant was the part Clapham played in stamping the Society with its broad and liberal principles.²

It may be said, however, that Lord Teignmouth adopted the Bible Society as his especial care and labour. Just as Wilberforce, Grant, and Stephen found their central interests in the fight against slavery, and Grant, Venn, and Simeon, in the Missionary movement, so Lord Teignmouth found his in the British and Foreign Bible Society. He made its interests his own. He worked for it with untiring zeal, defending it alike against active foes and injudicious friends, and retained his office of President till death, saying that he would be content to be forgotten as Governor-----

1. An indication may be found in the list of chief speakers at the Bible Society's anniversaries. The speakers include:

1805 William Wilberforce	1813 William Dealtry
1806 Thomas Babington	1814 Henry Thornton
1808 William Wilberforce	Zachary Macaulay
1809 William Wilberforce	Charles Grant, Jr.
1810 William Wilberforce	1815 William Wilberforce
1811 Thomas Babington	William Dealtry
Henry Thornton	Robert Grant
1812 William Wilberforce	
Charles Grant	
Henry Thornton	
Thomas Babington	

At all these anniversaries Lord Teignmouth was in the chair. It is clear that Clapham interest did not end with the founding of the Society.

Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, pp. 309-311.

2. Canton: Op.Cit., Vol. 1, pl 321.

General of India, if only he might be remembered as President of the Bible Society.¹

Lord Teignmouth was well supported by his friends. The Bible Society held a special interest for the Clapham Sect because it supplemented so well their other interests. It gave powerful support to the Sunday School movement;² it aided the early missionaries to India by sending out large quantities of Bibles, and by providing translations into native languages;³ it followed up the Emancipation Act by sending out 100,000 copies of the New Testament with Psalms as an Emancipation present to the freed Negroes;⁴ and it gave an impetus to the whole Evangelical movement by distributing in its first fifteen years a total of nearly two and a half million Bibles and New Testaments.⁵ Moreover by the singleness of its aim it made possible a co-operation with other Christians, which, whenever possible, the Clapham Sect eagerly welcomed. One of its early anniversaries moved Wilberforce to write with enthusiasm at the 'grand' sight, "Five or six hundred people of all sects and parties, with

1. Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 387.

In writing Teignmouth's memoirs in 1834 Josiah Pratt said, "to enumerate his Lordship's services to this institution would be to write a history of the Society!"

Christian Observer, 1834, p. 273.

2. Canton: Op.Cit., Vol. 1, p. 321.

3. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 387.

4. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 387.

5. Owen: Origin...of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 3, p. 515.

one heart, and face, and tongue".¹ The Bible Society indeed - perhaps in part because it was so largely shaped by Clapham influence - provided the Clapham Sect with aims and methods equally congenial to their spirit. It was always recognized by them as not less 'emphatically Claphamic' than the Missionary Society itself, and remained no less characteristically a Clapham cause.

The Bible Society was followed by one auxiliary society, in which the Clapham Sect were interested, and which therefore deserves brief mention.

Liberal as the Clapham Sect were, and eager as they were to work when possible with men of other faiths, they were always convinced churchmen. And, while they were willing to join with all Christians in circulating the Bible, they believed that to Anglicans the Prayer Book should also be given. Simeon expressed their opinion, "The Bible first, the Prayer-Book next, and all other books in subordination to these".² But none of their societies had specifically undertaken the circulation of the Prayer Book. So in 1812 Zachary Macaulay joined with

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 407.

It must be remembered that such co-operation in that day was unusual. Owen relates how at the first meeting of the Bible Society he was so powerfully impressed by the sight of so many denominations working together for a common religious purpose that he thought that the day marked 'an important epoch in the religious history of mankind'. Owen: Origin...of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, p. 47.

William Wilberforce's Anglo-Catholic sons are at pains to defend their father for having so agreed to unite with Dissenters, and admit only that he and his friends are 'hardly to be blamed' for their 'holy daring'.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 92.

2. G.W.E. Russell: The Household of Faith, p. 228.

some others in promoting The Prayer Book and Homily Society, a society modelled after the Bible Society, and devoted to the specific task of publishing and circulating 'without note or comment' the Prayer-Book and Homilies.¹

Quite naturally the brotherhood joined in earnestly with such a scheme. Lord Teignmouth, Wilberforce, Babington, and Grant all became Vice-Presidents; Henry Thornton was once more appointed Treasurer; and Charles Elliott worked with Macaulay on the Committee.² Macaulay, however, undertook the most arduous labours, and in 1825 'having rendered essential services to the Society' he was voted Honorary Governor for life.³

When it is recalled that most of the labours which the foregoing chapters have recounted, and still others yet to be mentioned, were carried on within the space of a few years, and that many of them were being undertaken simultaneously; when it is recalled that a space of twelve years, 1792-1804, saw the campaign for Abolition, the organization of the Sierra Leone colony, the first Charter struggle, the founding of the Missionary Society, the organization of the Cheap Repository Tracts, the institution of the Christian Observer, the founding of the British and

1. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 799. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 242, 429. Overton: English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 284.
2. Proceedings of the Prayer-Book and Homily Society, 1813. In 1814 Lord Teignmouth, Henry Thornton, Charles Simeon and Zachary Macaulay, had all paid the £10-10s to become life members. Proceedings, etc., 1814.
3. Proceedings, etc., 1825.

Foreign Bible Society, the establishment on a wide scale of Sunday Schools and other projects of popular education, and - as the next chapter will show - the undertaking of a multiplicity of philanthropic endeavours to relieve the poverty of the time; and when it is recalled that all these things were accomplished as the extra labours of a group of men already occupied by important duties of political, commercial, and professional life, and handicapped by the turmoil and reaction of one of the darkest and most troubled periods of their country's history, no further reminder is necessary that the Clapham Sect wrought a most unusual day's work in England. Just how unusual later chapters must go on to show.



The Old Swan Wharf

A well-known passage in Wilberforce's Life tells how, one morning in 1803, he and some friends met together in 'Mr. Hardcastle's counting-house' so early that they 'discussed by candle light' the newly proposed 'Bible Society' (See page 145 supra). For a long time the location of the celebrated 'counting-house' was lost to memory; but in 1796 Mr. Henry Morris, after diligent investigation about which he tells in his little booklet A Memorable Room (now rare), was able to identify the building marked 'Old Swan Wharf' as Mr. Hardcastle's former place of business, and the room to the left in the second story as the place where the Committee of the Religious Tract Society gathered to meet Wilberforce. The building still stands on the banks of the Thames, just a little to the left as one crosses London Bridge to the city. The above picture was taken by the writer in the summer of 1933.

Chapter Five

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Slave Trade abolished! India opened to Christianity! A great Missionary Society organized! An influential Magazine founded! Tract Societies and Bible Societies helped to wide influence and munificent incomes! Day schools and Sunday schools established in multiplicity! These, the last chapter pointed out, were no insignificant accomplishments for days of war and revolution, of fear and reaction, of external peril and internal suffering.

Yet a good deal of the criticism of the Clapham Sect centres around their very achievements.

"Mr. Wilberforce", said Hazlitt cynically, "carefully chooses his ground to fight the battles of loyalty, religion, and humanity, and it is such as is always safe and advantageous to himself".¹

And Hazlitt has had a long line of sneering descendants, not without representatives today, by whom the men who abolished slavery, and wrought so many works of righteousness, are recalled mainly to reflect not on the good deeds they did, but rather on the other deeds which they ought not to have left undone. Credited with keeping their eyes on misery in far places, Wilberforce and his

1. Hazlitt: Spirit of the Age, p. 220.

company are generally reproached with their social record at home. It will therefore be necessary, before taking up the story of their last crusade, to turn aside from the more characteristic Clapham enterprises and consider how far these reproaches may be justified.

At the outset it is well to recognize that the Clapham Sect were a group of wealthy men, who, though they were in many ways ahead of their times, were unmistakably and inevitably indigenous to their times. It is useless to criticize them from the standards of twentieth century Socialism. They were part of an aristocratic society which had never thought of questioning the order which made some men rich and powerful and others poor and dependent. They never thought, save with horror, of any society in which these distinctions would be abolished. They accepted as part of the eternal fitness of things that they should live according to their station; and they maintained their station with such zest, and heartiness, and magnificent hospitality, that their critics find therein ground for covert reproach. "In Egypt itself", sneered Thackeray, "there were not more savoury fleshpots than at Clapham".¹

1. Thackeray: The Newcomes, Chap.2,p. 20.
 Mrs Oliphant likewise in her Literary History of England suggests that the 'otherworldly' tenets of Clapham religion would have been less incongruous in people who entered with less zest into the pleasures of this world.

Literary History of England, Vol.3,p. 373.

Further, the Clapham circle, for whom the savoury fleshpots formed such an accepted and unquestioned feature of their own lives, lent their powerful influence to the relentless policy of repression which for half a generation ground down the poor in increasing misery, which savagely persecuted any with spirit enough to protest, and which, being revived again even when the Jacobinical scare was past, brought in 1817 the 'last hundred days of English freedom'¹, and in 1819 crowned its perfidy at Peterloo. Without the support of Wilberforce the government in 1795 would not have dared to undertake its policy of repression;² and if Wilberforce and his 'party of no-party men' had set their faces against that policy as they were not afraid to set their faces against other policies, a different and a happier chapter might have been written in English history.

To this indictment one must add that the philanthropy with which the Clapham Sect undertook to alleviate the distress against which they refused to allow a protest - especially that conducted for them by the unctious More sisters - was not seldom performed in a spirit of nauseating patronage, against which a people less degraded would have recoiled in just resentment.³

1. Cobbett: (Introduction by J.L.Hammond) History of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom, London, 1921.
2. In the earlier stages only Wilberforce's support gave the Pitt government strength to overcome the opposition to the measures. Later the measures became more popular with the public. See Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp.113-133.
3. "They have so little common sense, and so little sensibility, that we are obliged to beat into their heads continually the good we are doing them" is the characteristic report from the More sisters at Mendip. More: Mendip Annals, p. 67.

The social record of the Clapham Sect is therefore not without its blemishes; but, as even a brief survey of their principal labours will show, the blemishes are not the whole of the record.

THE 'REFORMATION OF MANNERS'

No activities of the Saints aroused more ridicule and contempt than did those for the 'reformation of manners'; and none are more open to criticism. But, though critics are prone to ignore it, even these labours had their necessity and their value.

"God Almighty has set before me", said Wilberforce in 1787, "two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners".¹ To achieve the latter object he began a campaign thoroughly representative of his time. He persuaded the King to issue a Proclamation Against Vice and Immorality.² Then to ensure that the impetus did not end with the Proclamation he founded a Society for Enforcing the King's Proclamation,³ into which he entered with much earnestness and enthusiasm, and in which he was joined by Grant and Thornton.⁴

It was this Society that aroused the wrath of both

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 149.
2. Wilberforce got the idea from Dr. Woodward's History of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in the year 1692. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 130.
3. Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 130-138.
4. Report of the...Society for Enforcing the King's Proclamation, 1800.

Conservatives and Radicals, and, truth to tell, not without justification. Its persecution of poor inoffensive Williams, for instance, was a piece of pious cruelty for which there can be no defense¹. But the common knowledge of that act only shows how the evils of the Society lived after it, while the good was readily forgotten. Some agency to do part of what the Proclamation Society aimed at was urgently needed. And, while the Proclamation Society did much of its work blunderingly, and some of it odiously, it did make an effort to cope with certain evils in the presence of which most of its contemporary critics were smugly complacent. It waged a difficult battle against the besotted drunkenness of a period little changed since the time, not long before, when the Bishop of Salisbury had declared that

"at any hour of the day....you may see some poor creature mad drunk.....and committing outrages in the street, or lying dead asleep upon bulks, or at the doors of empty houses" ⁴2

The Proclamation Society fought so vigorously to remedy such conditions that, after a thorough investigation, Sydney and Beatrice Webb stated, in their History of Liquor Licensing, that it 'set going a national movement'³, which produced

1. There is a good account of the Williams case in Clio by G.M. Trevelyan. But instead of the Proclamation Society Trevelyan puts in the name of the later Society for the Suppression of Vice, which did not start till 1801.
2. There is also an account in The Village Labourer (pp. 222-223) by the Hammonds; but the Hammonds are never quite fair to Wilberforce.
3. Sydney and Beatrice Webb: History of Liquor Licensing, Etc. p. 28.
3. Ibid, p. 53.

a marked 'lull' in crime, rioting, disorderly conduct, and brutal amusement; and that it became "an important contributory cause of the remarkable advance in 'respectability' made by the English workman during the first two decades of the nineteenth century",¹ There are blemishes in the record of the Proclamation Society, but the blemishes are not the whole of the record.

The Proclamation Society, however, received but lukewarm support, and in the early part of the nineteenth century was supplanted by The Society for the Suppression of Vice.² In this Society also the Clapham Sect were much interested, Wilberforce scarcely less so than in the earlier one.³ Macaulay and Lord Teignmouth also joined in as active workers, Lord Teignmouth at one time being President.⁴ This Society drew upon itself even more ridicule than the former, and as with the former 'unfortunately...the attack has lived while the defence has virtually perished'.⁵ Hume, in parliament, called it the "Society for Vice", and said that apart from the stopping of indecent literature there was hardly a good thing it had done.⁶ A more formidable

1. Sydney and Beatrice Webb: History of Liquor Licensing, etc., pp. 82-84.
2. Halevy says wrongly that the Proclamation was 'reorganized' as the Society for the Suppression of Vice. The Proclamation Society lived many years after the second society was formed. Moreover the Prospectus for the later Society disclaimed 'in the most explicit and ingenuous manner every idea or wish to rival' the Proclamation Society.
Halevy: England in 1815, p. 395.
Proposal for Establishing a Society for Suppression of Vice, etc, 1801
3. His diary is scattered with references to it.
4. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 799. Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol.2, pp. 153-154. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 242, 361.
5. Overton: The English Church in the 19th Century, p. 283.
6. Parliamentary Debates, New Series, viii, 709. Hume was speaking on the imprisonment of Richard Carlile.

opponent, Sydney Smith, in the Edinburgh Review, called it "The Society for the Suppression of Vice among those with less than £500 a year"; and, when the Society moved for the suppression of bear-baiting, urged the objection that nothing had been done when the aristocracy had hunted foxes, and boiled lobsters alive.¹ But, as Overton remarks, it was

"hardly an answer to those who were trying to check the demoralizing effects of the illegal recreations of one class, to say that the recreations of another class were cruel, though not illegal".²

Regardless of outside criticism the Clapham Sect continued through these societies, supplemented by much individual effort, to labour for the 'reformation of manners'. Their main efforts were directed to the abolition of duelling, of the lottery, and of brutal sports, and to the promotion of Sabbath Day observance.

Duelling was still prevalent at the end of the eighteenth century. For a considerable time gentlemen had been ceasing to wear swords because 'iron of itself draws a man on',³ yet the duel had by no means been abandoned. Pitt fought a duel with Tierney,⁴ Castlereagh with Canning,⁵ Wellington with Winchilsea.⁶ O'Connell killed his man in

1. Edinburgh Review, Jan. 1809. Sydney Smith: Works, Vol. 4, p.88.

2. Overton: English History in the Nineteenth Century, p.283.

3. Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p.20.

4. Rosebery: Pitt, p. 138.

5. Life of William Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 126.

6. Trevelyan: Op.Cit., p. 170.

a duel.¹ Wilberforce,² Sharp,³ and Lord Teignmouth⁴ all received challenges, as Lord Shaftesbury did later.⁵ And the challenges were not idle. Wilberforce counted it a blessing that he was able to follow his conscience and refuse the duel without loss of public character.⁶ And fiery tempered James Stephen confessed that his chief temptations were to duelling.⁷

Against duelling the Clapham Sect resolutely set their faces. Grant who, on his second voyage to India, saw a fellow passenger killed in a duel, pressed the charge against the bellicose challenger till judicial action was taken in England.⁸ Sharp wrote a tract against duelling.⁹ And Wilberforce nearly precipitated a political crisis over Pitt's duel with Tierney.¹⁰ Naturally even the Clapham Sect were able to make little immediate change in a custom so long established. But, regardless of any achievements suitable for tabulation, their attitude and influence did help to create the atmosphere which finally brought duelling into complete disrepute.¹¹

1. G.K.Chesterton: Cobbett, p. 126.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 1, p. 356.

3. Hoare: Granville Sharp, p. 36.

4. Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 2, p. 41.

5. Hammond: Shaftesbury, p. 254.

6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 113.

7. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 93.

8. Morris: Life of Grant, p. 35.

9. "Remarks on the Opinions of the Most Celebrated Writers on Crown Law, respecting the due Distinctions between Manslaughter and Murder -viz. against Duelling." Second Edition, 1790.

10. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 281-285.

11. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 395.

The lottery was another evil of the time. State lotteries were then an accepted institution. But Clapham was uncompromisingly opposed to them. When Wilberforce on the night of the abolition triumph had asked, "Well! Henry, what shall we abolish next", Thornton in his sober fashion had immediately replied, "The lottery, I think".¹ He expressed a common opinion of the group. Wilberforce said that he spent twenty years fighting the lottery;² and Babington took the case against lotteries as his especial charge in Parliament.³ Once again they achieved little visible results; but again they helped to bring low contemporary standards into ultimate disrepute.

Still another evil was the brutality of popular sports. Bull-baiting and bear-baiting then combined with gin to make an English holiday. The animals were tortured in a manner brutal to the last degree, and sometimes were harried for days before being finally despatched.⁴ Against such cruelty the Clapham Sect were unalterably opposed; and they never lost their enthusiasm. In his last year in Parliament Wilberforce fought for a bill for the prevention of cruelty to animals⁵. But respectable society

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 289.
2. Correspondence of William Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 274. And see Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 317-318.
3. Christian Observer, 1838, p. 127 and Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 226.
4. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 396.
Sir Richard Hill cited in the House of Commons a case where a troublesome bull had had its hoofs cut off, and was left to sustain and defend itself feebly upon its stumps. Parliamentary History, xxxvi, 830.
5. Stoughton: William Wilberforce, p. 61.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. v, pp 213-214.

then thought that barbarous sports were a necessary outlet for the degraded passions of the lower classes, and, as ever, suspected that reformers had ulterior motives. In 1802 Windham declared in the House of Commons that assaults on such amusements of the people struck him in no other light than as the first step to the reform of the masses. He stated that if people were diverted from bear-baiting and such sports they would fall a prey to the Methodists and Jacobins, who would teach them to read - a serious peril, since it was among the 'illiterate classes that Jacobinical doctrines had made the smallest progress'.¹

Against such a temper neither the Clapham Sect nor their Societies made much progress; but it is to their credit that they were opposed to the accepted sentiment of their time. They were a long way ahead of the opponents who derided them.

In addition to fighting such contemporary evils the Clapham Sect laboured also to promote a more general observance of the Sabbath. In 1794 Wilberforce supported a Bill for Sabbath Observance.² Later he gave up the idea of a Bill, and promoted a voluntary Association for the same purpose.³ He also made an attempt to obtain an Act

1. Parliamentary History, xxxvi, 834.

Courtenay supported Windham by saying that he had 'proved incontrovertibly that bull-baiting was the great support of the constitution in church and state'; and he joined in agreement with Windham that bull-baiting had saved England from all the horrors of Jacobinism and fanaticism.

Ibid, xxxvi, 841-842.

2. Christian Observer, 1838, p. 574.

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 271-272.

prohibiting Sunday newspapers, then coming into vogue.¹ To lessen the necessity for Sunday travelling, he persuaded Perceval to abandon the custom of opening Parliament on Monday; and, to set an example to the nation, he induced Addington to hold his levees on Saturday instead of Sunday evenings.² John Shore as Governor-General of India took the then unusual step of refusing to transact public business on Sunday.³ And all the Clapham Sect followed the principle in private life, and reserved the Sabbath for rest and quiet in the Clapham homes.⁴

Critics of the present day find it only too easy to exhibit these and similar labours as an example of excessive Sabbatarianism. But it is wise to remember that only the uncompromising insistence that the Sabbath was a Holy Day first procured for industrial labourers, relief from oppression seven days a week, and ensured working England the leisure which made popular education possible.

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 338. Wilberforce once bought the whole of the 19 Sunday papers then circulating, read them through at one sitting and condemned them all as worthless. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p.66.
2. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 233.
3. Teignmouth: Memoirs of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1, p. 269.
4. After the successive suicides of Whitbread, Romilly, Castlereagh, and Londonderry, Wilberforce expressed the opinion that if these had appreciated 'the unspeakable benefit of the Lord's Day', and, for one day in seven, had withdrawn their minds from the 'ordinary trains of thought and passion' they might not have collapsed under the strain. Certainly no one can fail to see what the Sabbath meant for men like Wilberforce.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, pp. 135, 143.
Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 232-235.

The Sunday freed from labour was one of the first forward steps in modern social progress.

"'Sabbatarianism'...gave England...Sunday protection and the Saturday half-holiday...The 'Ministrations of the Sabbath'...inspired a thousand and one organizations for education and philanthropy...They enabled working England to read and to think; they taught her how to propagate and to agitate. They brought the sobriety, the sense of solidarity, and the ability to organize without which the Trade Union Movement, for instance, could never have been developed into a potent and self disciplined force....Had Sunday been a day devoted to carousal, or sport, or even to recreation, the vast body of social organizations, which became so marked a feature of nineteenth-century England, could never have been established!"¹

All the story of the Clapham attitude to the Sabbath is not told in jibes at gloomy 'Puritanism'.

To fight against popular though brutal sports, against state lotteries, against drunkenness, against sedition and blasphemy, and for a Sunday of rest and meditation, in short, to fight for the 'reformation of manners' brought the Clapham Sect little glory, and much ridicule, and at times led them into extravagances and mistakes for which they must be gravely censured. Yet on the whole even in these labours they were inspired by high principles, and left their own and succeeding generations more deeply in their debt than has been commonly recognized.

1. Bready: Shaftesbury, pp. 394-395.

Wilberforce urged the effect of Sunday rest upon education. "How many (of the lower classes) would have remained unlettered, but for Sunday schools, which depend on cessation of ordinary labour on sabbath".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 424.

In Wilberforce's day, of course, employers were not favourable to being deprived of one day's labour a week.

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 395.

PHILANTHROPY

The Clapham Sect, however, did not confine their social concern to the 'reformation of manners'. They devoted themselves not only to the moral but also to the material well-being of the unfortunate classes about them. They laboured, as they would have put it, not only to 'improve the manners' but also to 'increase the comforts' of the poor. Again, inevitably, they approached the problem from their own point of view. And they belonged not to the Fabian Society, but to the eighteenth century aristocracy. They saw poverty not as a problem to be solved, but as a situation calling for their sympathy. If men were victimized by a social system they would not assault the system, they would do their best to minister to the victims. They had their limitations; but within these limitations they laboured heroically.

Most of their labours were performed privately, or through small societies, now remembered only by passing references, or perhaps passed into complete oblivion. But sufficient evidence remains to indicate extraordinary exertions on behalf of folk, many of whom had few people of power and consequence to remember them. "The Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor";¹ "The Society

1. Wilberforce helped to found this Society in 1796 and later became Vice-President. To obtain adequate information on which to act Wilberforce sent an elaborate questionnaire to a large circle of private friends. Macaulay also laboured with Wilberforce in this Society.
(continued)

for the relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts";¹
 "The Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline";²
 "The Society for Bettering the Poor at Clapham";³ "The
 Indigent Blind Institution";⁴ "The Foundling Hospital";⁵
 are representative of the philanthropic interests of the
 Saints.

With labours in such societies the Saints mixed all
 sorts of sporadic charities: to provide support for war
 widows;⁶ for penniless sailors;⁷ for 'suffering Germans';⁸
 for 'foreigners in distress';⁹ ~~for~~ for the 'Refuge of the
 Destitute'.¹⁰ The details of these efforts are very hazy;
 but Macaulay, Thornton, Stephen, Babington, and Venn seem

1. This Society was started in 1772, with John Thornton as one of the chief movers. In five years it released 14,007 people. It used to release worthy people who were imprisoned by the harsh debt laws of the time. (As late as 1824 the Lord Advocate said that 'more than three quarters of the persons now imprisoned in Scotland are for small debts'). Wilberforce and Henry Thornton were both interested in this Society.

Parliamentary Debates, New Series, xi, 1171.

An Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 394.

2. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 54.
3. John Venn was a prime originator of the labours of this Society. Venn Family Annals, p. 140. Clapham Vestry Minutes (MSS at Clapham).
4. Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 2, p. 154.
5. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 154.
6. Life of William Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 262.
7. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 363.
8. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 198. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 310.
9. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 128.
10. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 95.

 In Essays Moral and Political by Southey there is a long and appreciative review of twenty years of the Society's labours. Very much good seems to have been accomplished by the thoughtful and wise measures taken to help labourers to self-support.

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 483. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 414. Vol. 3, p. 43. Et passim. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 242.

to have been closely associated with Wilberforce in most of them, and very probably all of the Clapham Sect in some of them.¹

The Clapham Sect did not rest content with such public and concerted activities. They also did much through individual effort. Indeed they were philanthropists of a type not then familiar. They regarded the right use of money as one of ^{the} practical ways in which they could express their tremendous sense of personal responsibility. Wealthy themselves, they did not set high store by wealth. Some of them, from integrity and devotion to their chosen causes, deliberately put aside possibilities of greatly increased wealth. In India Lord Teignmouth and Grant both refused to enrich themselves by practices which at the time were considered conventional and even irreproachable.² Zachary Macaulay, at one time worth £100,000, by his devotion to the cause of slavery virtually sacrificed all he had, so that Thomas Babington Macaulay, at a time when his Parliamentary fame stood at its highest, was reduced to sell the -----

1. The above list of societies and charitable endeavours is only very partial; but as a great many societies and schemes are mentioned only by passing reference in some biography, or just by name in a list in Wilberforce's diary, it would serve no useful purpose to pad the list. It was said with truth of Wilberforce, Thornton, and Macaulay that it would be scarcely possible to mention a charity of their day which they had not at some time assisted, or to which they had not subscribed.

Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 499.
Christian Observer, 1839, p. 799.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, pp. 301-306.

2. Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 88 & 145-152.

Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol. 1, p. 114.

gold medals which he had gained at Cambridge.¹ Wilberforce by his generosity seriously depleted his family resources. In one year he gave away £3,000 more than he had earned.² And in the closing years of his life he had no house of his own, but lived with his different sons³ - even though he might, at that time, says George Stephen, have doubled his income by charging higher rents to his poor tenants.⁴ Simeon 'practiced boundless munificence!⁵ John Thornton earned but to give away. His total givings were said to amount to more than £150,000.⁶ Cowper wrote of him that he had,

"an industry in doing good,"⁷
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;".

His son Henry emulated the worthy example by giving away two-thirds of his income.⁸ Yet Henry had good company.

1. G.O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 175. Trevelyan says that Zachary Macaulay in his devotion to the anti-slavery cause, "sacrificed all that a man may lawfully sacrifice - health, fortune, repose, favour, and celebrity", and "died a poor man, though wealth was within his reach". Ibid, p. 64.
 2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 4.
 3. Ibid, Vol. 5, pp. 330-331.
 4. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 81. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 313.
 5. Teignmouth: Reminiscences of Many Years, Vol. 1, p. 57.
 6. Rudolf: Clapham and the Clapham Sect, p. 105.
 7. Cowper: Poetical Works, p. 376. "In Memory of the late John Thornton".
 8. Before marriage Henry Thornton gave away six-sevenths of what he earned; after marriage two-thirds. In one year of distress he gave away £9,000. Here is a specimen of his spending:

1790	Charity	£2260	All other expenses	£1543
1791	"	3960	"	1817
1792	"	7508	"	1616
1793	"	6680	"	1988
- Overton: The Evangelical Revival in the 18th Century, p.88.
 Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 149.

"Others of the band of friends", says G.W.E.Russell,"
even exceeded this proportion".¹

The Clapham Sect, therefore, were not callous to the sufferings of the poor, nor insensible to the responsibilities of the rich. They were not touched with the prevalent heartlessness towards the lower classes. They had a deep and genuine interest in the people whom the circumstances of their time were so cruelly oppressing. And yet, with what now seems inexcusable heartlessness, they supported the Sedition Bills, approved the suspension of Habeas Corpus, urged the government to still more stringent measures, and even defended Peterloo. Where lies the explanation?

It lies mainly in three sources. The first is the unreasoning fear created by the French Revolution. The Clapham Sect, especially in the slave trade conflict, had frequently suffered from that fear. But they themselves were more affected with it than they knew. Few Englishmen of their time escaped it - the liberals little more than the conservatives. Paris with its ferocious mobs, its guillotine set on high, and its streets drenched with human blood, had confronted civilization with something new and unknown, something 'superhuman, immeasurable, incalculable'.² To Englishmen it seemed that Revolution took

1. G.W.E.Russell: The Household of Faith, p. 227.

2. Rosebery: Pitt, p. 160.

from men everything that gave them a civilization with dignity, culture, and continuity, and left them 'like flies in the summer'.¹ The fear that revolution would spread to England was greatly exaggerated; but it is easy to be wise after the event. At the time the peril seemed sufficiently real. The mobs of England were not like the mobs of France; but they were brutal enough and formidable enough to inspire alarm. Not very long before, in the Gordon riots, they had come near to burning down London. In the minds of the Clapham Sect, therefore, the thought of men gathering to concoct measures for a strike was always tinted with memories of the Terror. Industrial conspiracy seemed not far from revolution, and safety seemed to lie only in controlling at one stage what could not be controlled at another. Consequently while the Clapham Sect were genuinely concerned for miseries of the poor they saw only infinite peril if the poor themselves began to combine for their deliverance.²

The second and supporting explanation lies in the political economy which in their day held unquestioned sway. Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus had combined to

1. Green: History of the English People, Vol. 4, p. 304.
2. Wilberforce was guilty of no hypocrisy, - he was never a hypocrite - when he said in 1795 that the Sedition Acts were only temporary sacrifices to preserve all liberties the longer; and when in 1819 at the passing of the Six Acts he urged that "it is one of the peculiar excellencies of the British Constitution, to be able in times of popular commotion to strengthen the hands of the executive government, and afterwards, when the danger is past, to revert to our former state of liberty and freedom".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 114.

Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 421.

teach¹ that poverty was inevitable, that the population, multiplying faster than the means of subsistence, left an inevitable fringe of society on the borderland of starvation; that there was an iron law of wages, allotting with scientific finality the total sum that could be left for labour; and that all interference with these scientific laws was unwise, and ultimately futile. Not only conservatives believed these things; radicals were not less convinced. As the Hammonds point out, the only difference was that the conservative believed in all kinds of privilege for himself, while the radical believed in privileges for no one, but naked, unrestrained competition for all. Both believed that wages and poverty were determined by natural law. Even Sir Francis Burdett declared that 'no one gave less to the labourer than it was the interest of the labourer to receive';² and Francis Place argued against Shaftesbury's Ten-Hour Bill,

"All legislative interference is pernicious...The law must compel...the fulfilment of contracts. There it should end. So long as the supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour the labourer will undersell his fellows, and produce poverty, misery, vice, and crime".³

The Clapham Sect were governed by the same convictions, and consequently, much as they sympathized with the starving

1. See Hammond: The Town Labourer, pp. 196-205, where there is an excellent brief survey. The Hammonds point out that the significant feature was not exactly what the economists taught, but the parts of their teaching that laid hold of the public mind.
2. Ibid., p. 200.
3. Graham Wallas: Life of Francis Place, p. 174.

crowds they did not believe that 'combinations' could bring any final relief any more than combinations could affect bad crops. They believed that the condition of the labourer was determined by economics and not by politics. And when they saw radicals agitating the people to combine, they believed them only to be working for what in the long run could not be attained by such methods, and only to be certain of leading hapless and deluded sufferers to their own undoing.

To these explanations must be added a third. The Clapham Sect looked at all problems from a single point of view. Their final question always passed from material considerations to spiritual. They were indeed concerned that the poor should be comfortable; but they were more concerned that the poor should be pious. They believed, in fact, that it was better to see people lean and religious than fat and irreligious. And while they did not think that impiety in any way tended to fatness, they were afraid that leanness might tend to impiety; that clever agitators might make use of the resentment against unavoidable poverty to undermine morality and religion; and that the whole agitation stirring in the lower classes was thoroughly materialistic in tone and conducive to a materialistic and anti-religious outlook.

"I declare", said Wilberforce, "my greatest cause of difference with the democrats, is their laying, and causing

the people to lay, so great a stress on the concerns of this world, as to occupy their whole minds and hearts, and to leave a few scanty and lukewarm thoughts for the heavenly treasure".¹

When Pitt by his Coercion Acts so terribly ended the early popular movements Wilberforce honestly thought he had ended also a serious menace to the state and to religion, and expressed his appreciation of Pitt's action in the striking phrase, "He stood between the living and the dead and the plague was stayed".² With such conviction it is no wonder that the Clapham Sect dreaded the entire agitation and thought that sternest measures were most merciful.

In all this the Clapham Sect reflected clearly the prevailing temper of their time, and shared in its fear, its conservatism, and its cruelty.

LIBERAL TENDENCIES

What can be added of the Clapham Sect is that once they escaped the bondage of that ill-favoured influence they were naturally liberal in outlook and action. Wilberforce, for instance, the acknowledged leader of the Saints, not only introduced as his maiden measure in Parliament a Bill for purifying County elections, but also kept his reforming temper through the years.³ In 1809 he

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 36.

2. Quoted in Brougham's Speeches, Vol. 2, p. 9.

3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 51.

Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 510.

supported Curwen's bill for making the sale of parliamentary seats illegal.¹ Even in the troubled year of 1817 he declared himself still in favour of parliamentary reform;² in 1822 he voted for Lord John Russell's bill; and in 1831 - almost at the end of his life - in spite of all the turmoil to which he was so adverse, he told his sons that he would have voted for the Reform Bill.³ His followers, like him, were for reform. William Smith said that he attended every meeting on the subject for twenty-two years, and he voted for reform to the end of his parliamentary career.⁴ Thornton also supported parliamentary reform, and advocated the unpopular Income Tax,⁵ and the Bank Restriction Act. Grant introduced into parliament measures to prevent the prevalent bribery,⁶ Stephen forced the first movement for Chancery Reform,⁷ and Granville Sharp, though never in parliament, wrote tracts on parliamentary reform which excite wonder that he was never in prison.⁸ Trevelyan points out how Wilberforce retained his reforming spirit through the years, while Pitt became 'more and more the tool of vested interests of every kind'.⁹ And that comparison might be generally

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 364.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 315, and see Vol. 3, p. 449.
3. Ibid. Vol. 5, pp. 125-126. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 444.
4. D.N.B. Sub Nom.
5. D.N.B. Sub Nom.
- Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 277.
6. Morris: Life of Grant, pp. 238-239.
7. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 31.
8. Lascelles: Granville Sharp, pp. 103-107.
9. G.M. Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 53.

applied between the Clapham Sect and their Tory associates.

The Clapham Sect also supported penal reform. Wilberforce was utterly without the contemporary notion of the sanctity of law for its own sake, and spoke scathingly about 'our murderous laws',¹ 'our bloody laws',² and 'the barbarous custom of hanging'.³ As early as 1786 he carried through the Commons a small measure of penal reform.⁴ And thereafter, Halevy says, "every time Romilly brought forward in the Commons the abolition of the death penalty for an offence Wilberforce intervened to support Romilly with his influence".⁵ In 1819 he presented a petition in the Commons against the severity of the criminal code.⁶ And he spoke with especial vehemence against the stupid severity of the game laws, which he declared to be,

"so opposite to every principle of personal liberty, so contrary to all our notions of private right...that the sense of the greater part of mankind is in determined hostility to them".⁷

And the attitude of Wilberforce was the attitude of the Saints. Though they did not make penal reform a crusade of their own, they supported the others who did - MacIntosh, Bentham, Buxton, Romilly, and even Burdett.⁸

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 370.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 256.

3. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 131.

4. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 54.

5. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 397.

6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 12.

7. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 431.

8. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 440, 444, 504; Vol. 5, pp. 14, 127, 181.

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 397.

The Clapham Sect fought for other progressive measures of the day. They advocated, for instance, the abolition of the Press Gang, the relief of 'chimney boys', and the regulation of factory conditions. Wilberforce in 1802 joined with Peel in establishing the first Factory Act, but objected that the Act did not go far enough.¹ In 1805 he took up the cause of the Yorkshire weavers.² In 1818 he supported Peel in a further extension of the Factory Act.³ He lent his warm sympathy to the cause of the chimney boys.⁴ And his attitude on such questions was again the attitude of the Saints. Granville Sharp, for instance, is said to have 'moved all the powers of his age'⁵ against the Press Gang. Sir James MacIntosh, himself a liberal, gave his judgement that though Wilberforce was by predilection a Tory, by action he must be judged 'liberal and reforming'.⁶ And the description fits the leader scarcely better than it does the followers.⁷

Not less did the Clapham Sect show their essentially liberal spirit in their attitude to men of other faiths. On the one hand they were resolutely opposed to the oppression

1. Halevy: England in 1815, pp. 250-251.
2. Hammond: The Skilled Labourer, pp. 183-184.
3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 433.
4. Bready: Shaftesbury, p. 329. Coupland, Op.Cit., p.435.
Halevy: England in 1815, p. 397.
5. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 541.
Lascelles: Granville Sharp, pp. 88-95.
6. Edinburgh Review, 1838, p. 167.
7. For a very fine account of Wilberforce's social activities see Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 426-435. What Coupland says of Wilberforce is largely true of the whole group. See also Halevy: England in 1815, pp. 395-397.

of any dissenting minorities; and on different occasions gave them defense and protection;¹ and on the other hand advocated Emancipation for the Roman Catholics. Earnest churchmen though they were, they naturally took the liberal side. In 1797 Wilberforce carried through Parliament a Bill to admit Roman Catholics to the militia.² In 1805 Henry Thornton declared himself for outright emancipation, though Wilberforce and Babington had not then gone so far.³ But again the Clapham Sect grew liberal with the years. In 1813 Wilberforce declared himself for emancipation.⁴ In 1819 his diary shows him in Grattan's house at work with the Whigs.⁵ In 1820 when Grattan died both Wilberforce and Grant voiced their tribute in the House of Commons.⁶ And in this cause again the attitude of the leader was the attitude of the group. Thornton, the Stephens, the Macaulays, the Grants, Dealtry, and Buxton, all stood for Roman Catholic Emancipation, and the Christian Observer manfully supported it.⁷

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 2, p. 315; Vol. 3, pp. 509, 512. Wilberforce received a public vote of thanks from the Methodists for his defense of their people.
2. Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 222.
3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 231.
4. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 94-100.
5. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 16.
6. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 444.
7. Overton: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 306.
 Balleine: History of the Evangelical Party, p. 210.
 Mathieson: England in Transition, p. 248.
 Granville Sharp however - for what is man in his best estate? - differed from the rest of the brotherhood and opposed Emancipation.
 Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 543.

CRITICISMS

The reproach of conservatism, therefore, can not be too lightly thrown at the Clapham Sect. The men who in one of the most reactionary periods of English history so far escaped the dominant spirit that, in addition to their magnificent achievements - than thought revolutionary - in their chosen fields, they favoured Parliamentary reform, penal reform, and the reform of the game and criminal laws, fought for the first factory legislation, advocated Roman Catholic Emancipation, denounced state lotteries, opposed the Press Gang, supported the chimney sweep, and, against the accepted sentiment of the time, engaged in a multiplicity of enterprises to educate an illiterate populace - these men surely, although they had by no means cast off all the limitations of their age, cannot deservedly be classed as reactionaries.

Yet there are writers from the time of Cobbett and Hazlitt to the present day who have thus classed them. The Hammonds, for instance, rarely mention Wilberforce save to sneer at his conservatism and his piety. Certainly a picture sketched from references in their pages would be viciously untrue to the real Wilberforce.¹ But the

1. Let it be said at once that the Hammonds are masterly economic historians; and that their books are not only informative and illuminating, but are written in a style of unusual charm, and a diction at times of classic dignity, and also with an infectious social passion. But they seem quite incapable of understanding what religion means to men like Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, and how

(continued)

Hammonds are not without clerical associates. Canon Raven, in his Christian Socialism, charges that Wilberforce 'never realized that while he was bringing liberty to negroes in plantations, the white slaves of industry in mine and factory were being made the victims of a tyranny a thousandfold more cruel!, and that Wilberforce 'consistently opposed every single attempt to benefit the condition of the workers by legislation'.¹ Had Canon Raven read a few copies of Zachary Macaulay's Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter he would have rushed less thoughtlessly into his extravagant rhetoric that tyranny in factories was 'a thousand-fold more cruel' than tyranny on slave plantations. And had he read Wilberforce's Life more carefully he would have found that

1. Raven: Christian Socialism, p. 12. This book is an excellent survey of the Christian Socialist movement, but somewhat unfair to the preceding generation. Canon Raven refers to the social studies of Gisborne, and contrasts Wilberforce's actions with Oastler's. But Gisborne was himself an ardent Evangelical. His social creed would have been heartily endorsed by every one of his Clapham associates, "No man stands authorized in the sight of his maker to enter into, or to continue in, any species of traffic or business which is either in itself unjust or immoral, or which in any way tends to impair the happiness of the human race". Duties of Man, p. 432. Oastler also was an Evangelical, and was led into his humanitarian labours by the door of the anti-slavery crusade - and from there went on to apply the same principles in other labours. See Alfred: History of the Factory Movement, Vol. 1, p. 96.
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much it was responsible for the dynamic of their lives. After reading their Shaftesbury for instance, one is inevitably reminded of the reply to Southey after the publication of his Life of Wesley, "Sir! Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep".

Wilberforce did not 'consistently oppose every single attempt' to benefit factory workers by legislation, but rather that he ardently supported the first attempt ever made to benefit them by legislation, and objected only that the act did not go far enough.¹ But apart from such considerations one must remember that the knowledge, and in no small part the development, of the hideous factory and mine conditions came late in Wilberforce's life. Wilberforce threw himself at the first against what was the most titanic iniquity of the time. And to reproach him, and those who, with him, spent a lifetime of unwearied toil in exposing and exterminating one iniquity, that they did not also expose and exterminate another is like reproaching Columbus for not having also discovered Australia.

Canon Raven also repeats the common prejudice that the Evangelicals, of whom the Clapham Sect were the most conspicuous representatives, had a 'contempt for this life' which led to the divorce of religion from life, and fostered the alliance between reformers and secularists.² It is, of course, easy to understand the aspects of Evangelical piety from which Canon Raven recoils. But on behalf of the Clapham Sect one must nevertheless urge that his judgement was wrong. The Clapham Sect, the leading Evangelicals of their

1. See Supra, 178 & Bready, Shaftesbury, p. 395.

2. Raven: Christian Socialism, p. 11.

day, did not divorce religion from life.¹ They linked religion with life. They linked it with hunted Negroes on the coast of Africa, on the high seas, and in the plantations of the West Indies. They linked it to standards of political conduct, to the corrupt manners of society, and to the debauched mobs of their time. They linked it to the wretches condemned by game laws, and oppressed in filthy prisons. They linked it to the ragged children condemned otherwise to ignorance; and, by philanthropic and benefit societies, they linked it to the improvident and unfortunate poor. Their efforts were sometimes casual, and their methods were often awry; but at every point at which they did touch life, it was their religion that led them to the contact. Their religion may, indeed, have been otherworldly centred, but the circumference of its action embraced a weltering area of humanity, of which most contemporary religion was comfortably oblivious. Fairbairn judged more truly than Raven when he wrote

"Evangelical piety.....was the very reverse of other-worldly, intensely practical, brotherly, benevolent, beneficent, though somewhat prudential in the means it used to gain its most magnanimous ends.....He who speaks in its disparagement either does not know it, or feels no gratitude

1. After his conversion Wilberforce stated his conviction as to where his religion must lead him, "My walk, I am sensible, is a public one; my business is in the world, and I must mix in the assemblies of men, or quit the part which Providence seems to have assigned me".

Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 74.

for good achieved".¹

Again neither the Clapham Sect nor the Evangelicals generally fostered the alliance between reformers and secularists - save in so far as the Evangelicals themselves were the reformers. The Evangelicals fostered a new alliance between secularists and religion. Wilberforce and his associates were drawn by their common humanitarian interests into close connection with most of the leading secularists of their day.² They found themselves fighting side by side with James Mill, Jeremy Bentham, Romilly, Fox, Hume, Brougham, Sheridan, and even Burdett. In his penetrating analysis of English society of that period Halevy makes special point of that feature of the situation.³ And Graham Wallas in his introduction to the English translation of Halevy's work refers again to the same feature, and tells how he himself discovered, as soon as he became a practical politician, that there was still a strong working alliance between Evangelical Christianity and non-Christian Radicalism.⁴

1. Fairbairn: Catholicism, Roman and Anglican, p. 292.

See Bready: Shaftesbury, pp. 390-396.

2. "They (Wilberforce and his friends) were...on good terms with avowed liberals attached to no denomination, and with Free Thinkers who made no secret of their hostility to religion. It was enough if their friends were animated by a sincere and practical zeal for the reformation of abuses, and the crusade against ignorance and vice. By a strange paradox men who were Protestant to the backbone, zealots for the dogma of justification by faith, were so devoted to philanthropy that on the common ground of good works they were reconciled with the most lukewarm of Christians, even with declared enemies of Christianity".

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 383.

Lady Knutsford pointed out the amusing spectacle of these pietistic campaigners congratulating themselves in the Abolition struggle on Sheridan's being their ally 'whether drunk or sober'. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 269.

3. Halevy: England in 1815, pp. 397, 383, 509-511.

4. Ibid, Introduction, p. vi-vii.

Canon Raven should rather have said that if reform was divorced from religion the Evangelicals were least of all to blame.

The Clapham Sect of course did not find their primary interests in what is narrowly known as 'social reform'. Their primary interests lay in the Abolition movement, the missionary movement, the Bible societies, Sunday schools, and conservative philanthropy. But in their defense it needs to be added that their towering achievements in these fields renders them such an obvious mark for invidious criticism in other fields that they have not generally received credit for being as liberal as they really were. They had the unpropitious fate of being attacked in their lifetime by two masters of English prose, and one master of sardonic wit,¹ whose brilliancy brought their worst failings into distorted focus, and created an ill-balanced tradition, which, even when true in detail is untrue in proportion. And the very permanence of their fame has kept them ever since selected targets for ironic illustration. That the whole contemporary propertied class

1. i.e. Cobbett, Hazlitt, and Sydney Smith. There have been some writers who have been able to take a balanced view of their greatness and their imperfections, e.g. the first Sir James Stephen, the Trevellyans, and Professor Coupland. But the predominant tradition, one fears, is not so balanced. The writer began reading for this thesis with an a priori opinion that probably a chief duty would be to castigate the Sect for being otherworldly individualists, who might be interested in distant slaves, but who made no impact on social conditions in England. And he has been surprised to see how many other people with whom he has talked have held the same idea.

favoured coercive legislation and corn laws, can be recounted as illuminating economic record without any alarms about religions or excursions into creeds; but that William Wilberforce, the emancipator of the slaves, should vote for coercive legislation or corn laws, irresistibly invites a sparkling examination into the narrowness of his Evangelical piety.

A fair judgement of the Clapham Sect should be balanced by three considerations:

1. That, though they were unmistakably stamped with the mark of their times, their general attitude was far more liberal than one would infer from the stock references to coercion and blasphemy.
 2. That their central labours were of supreme significance to the world, and were accomplished in a spirit of disinterested devotion to high principles. It is but ungracious tribute hastily to present a patronizing approval of their anti-slavery labours, as a convenient stance from which to launch an oblique assault on some other action. The anti-slavery campaign was of a character unknown in the history of mankind. Lecky says ^{that} it is 'one of the three or four perfectly virtuous labours in the history of nations'.¹ Previously there had been instances of men fighting nobly for deliverance of their fellows, who could appeal to them,
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1. Lecky: History of European Morals. Quoted in Telford: A Sect that Moved the World, p. 104.

Henry W. Nevison says, "George Meredith, a stern critic of our country's politics, once told me that the abolition and the compensation were among the finest actions in the world's history" Radio Times, July, 1933.

from evils whose workings they could see. But there had been no precedent for this far rarer virtue, this passion for the deliverance of a strange race in a distant land, where the cries of the sufferers were unheard, and their wrongs were hidden from view. The men who gave their lives to that endeavour deserve as a consequence not a criticism more caustic, but a charity more liberal than usual. The common evidence of the narrowness of all liberals suggests that few men deserve more than Wilberforce and his little brotherhood the grateful remembrance of mankind.

3. That the Clapham Sect left an often unconsidered legacy to liberal movements. A later chapter will deal with this more fully. But here it is pertinent to say that a generation of persistent propaganda of humanitarian principles had many unpremeditated results. The sentiments so nobly marshalled for the defeat of slavery did not confine themselves to the purpose for which they were invoked, nor expire when emancipation was achieved. They became manifest in a more sensitive humanitarianism which overflowed in many subsequent reforms, and helped other radicals to win other victories in the very areas which the Clapham Sect themselves left most alone.

Chapter Six

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN THE LATER ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENTS

"You have crossed the Red Sea", came a cautious congratulation to Wilberforce after the Abolition triumph of 1807, "but Pharaoh may follow your steps and aim at some abridgement of the deliverance".¹ The Clapham Sect were fully alive to the peril, and, despite the immediately favourable outlook,² began to lay plans for the consolidation of their victory.

Their first labours were directed towards Africa. They were now arranging the transfer of Sierra Leone from their control to direct supervision by the British Crown.³ Yet they felt that - especially as the slave trade was about to cease - they ought not to abandon their original intention to make the colony a visible testimony in Africa that Negroes were capable of developing a Christian civilization.

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 360.

2. Not only England, but America and Denmark had abolished the slave trade; France, Spain, and Holland were withheld by the war from active trading; and only Portugal remained engaging in the trade on any considerable scale.
Christian Observer, 1807, p. 680.

3. On the same day which saw the end of the legal slave trade - January 1, 1808 - Sierra Leone passed from the control of the Directors to the British Crown.

Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p. 133.

THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION

Less than three weeks after the Abolition Bill had been passed they therefore gathered at a meeting in Freemason's Hall,

"for the purpose of concerting means for improving the opportunity presented by the abolition of the Slave Trade, for promoting innocent commerce and civilization in Africa."¹

The meeting adopted two series of resolutions (carefully prepared by Wilberforce beforehand) and formally established the African Institution,² of which the main object was to promote civilization in Africa by providing 'example to enlighten the minds of the natives, and instruction to enable them to direct their industry to proper objects'.³ The Institution, being launched in the high tide of Abolition enthusiasm, secured wide support and distinguished patronage, the Duke of Gloucester becoming President.⁴ But its enthusiasm was naturally centred in the Clapham Sect. They had all rallied to the new cause. Teignmouth, Babington, Grant, Sharp, Thornton, Clarkson, Macaulay, Stephen, Venn, Gisborne, William Smith, and Wilberforce were all on the first Committee (nominated by Wilberforce).⁵ When the Society was fully organized Wilber-

1. Christian Observer, 1807, p. 270.

2. Ibid, 1807, pp. 270-273 and 679.

3. Ibid, 1807, p. 680. Hoare: Memoirs of Granville Sharp, p. 440.

4. Christian Observer, 1807, p. 271. Hoare: Op.Cit.p. 442.

5. Ibid, 1807, p. 271.

force was a Vice-President; Babington, Clarkson, Grant, Macaulay, Sharp, Smith, and Stephen were Directors; Thornton was given his customary job as Treasurer;¹ and Macaulay, to whom as usual was assigned the real burden, was made Secretary.²

The African Institution set to work in a large way; but was soon led to alter its original emphasis. For the Slave Trade did not cease with the official Abolition. Most of the West Indian planters still believed that 'buying was cheaper than breeding'; and maintained a demand for slaves which encouraged a new business in illicit trading. Two years after the passing of the Abolition Bill smugglers 'swarmed' on the African coast; and, under the cover of foreign flags, slave ships were brazenly fitted out in London and Liverpool, ostensibly to carry slaves to the Spaniards and Portuguese, actually to smuggle them to the British Colonies.³ Stephen and Macaulay, who alone of all the members of the African Institution had local knowledge of the West Indies or of Africa, quickly realized how dangerous to the whole movement the illicit trading might

1. Christian Observer, 1808, p. 207.

2. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 281. Lady Knutsford says that the real burden of the work fell on Macaulay though his labours were lightened by the vigorous co-operation of Mr. Stephen. The Christian Observer says that "In the planning and formation of this Society, Mr. Macaulay, together with Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Stephen, and some other leading abolitionists, took a principal share; but the chief labour, as in most other cases, fell upon Mr. Macaulay." Christian Observer, 1839, p. 796.

3. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 5-6.

4.

become, and how impossible it was to promote civilization in Africa while slave traders continued to harry its coasts. Accordingly they concentrated their resources to meet the new peril, and transformed the African Institution actually into a large Anti-Slavery Society.¹

Exploiting all the influence of the Institution the eager company laboured to make good the Abolition Bill. They obtained from the government the institution of a coast guard to intercept the African smugglers;² the appointment of an investigating committee;³ and the establishment in Sierra Leone of a Court of Vice-Admiralty to expedite the processes of justice.⁴ They succeeded in 1809 in getting an Order-in-Council giving the right of search against Portuguese vessels;⁵ in 1810 in obtaining a Treaty by which Portugal forbade her subjects to carry on the trade in the parts of Africa that did not belong to her;⁶ and in 1811 in winning their first decisive victory against the smugglers, by securing a law - drawn up substantially by Stephen⁷ - which made slave trading for British subjects a felony, punishable with fourteen years Transportation.⁸

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1. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 4.
 2. Christian Observer, 1808, p. 338. (From Second Report of the African Institution).
 3. Ibid, p. 338.
 4. Ibid, p. 339.
 5. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol. 2, p.235. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 398. Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, p. 135.
 6. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol. 2, p.235.
 7. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 9-10.
 8. Klingberg: Op.Cit., p. 135. Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, p. 22.

These concerted public labours were aided and supplemented by much direct personal influence. Wilberforce's diary shows him now 'urging' Yorke to despatch ships of war to Africa to clear the smugglers 'by a thorough sweep';¹ now 'supporting Mr. Barnham's motion for the introducing of free labour into the West Indies';² now working up an agitation to stop 'the persecution of the missionaries, or rather the forbidding religion to the slaves in Trinidad and....Demerara';³ and now carefully outlining 'subjects of action and deliberation for Abolitionists'.⁴ But even Wilberforce's zeal did not satisfy his ardent associates, and when he became temporarily occupied with incidental duties Stephen wrote to him sharply that he must 'resolutely make time to think and act on Abolition matters'.⁵ Stephen and Macaulay of course were toiling as indefatigably as ever. "We are working like negroes", Stephen writes, "for the negroes of Berbice, Sierra Leone, Trinidad, and Africa at large".⁶

Yet, despite the prestige of the African Institution, and the diligence of the Clapham warriors, the course of the battle was disheartening. It was so easy to capture slaves in Africa, so easy to smuggle them into the West Indies; and,

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 514.

2. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 514.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 547.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 483.

5. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 486.

6. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 546.

in the 'sealed book' of a large plantation, so difficult to prove that they had been smuggled, that the illicit trade grew to proportions scarcely less than those of the old legal trade.¹ In 1810 Wilberforce wrote to Macaulay expressing his grief that the West Indians were 'not accommodating themselves to the new system', and asking Macaulay what he thought of 'firing a pamphlet at them'.² It was not Macaulay, however, but Stephen who engineered the defeat of the smugglers, and prepared the way for the final emancipation.

THE REGISTRY PLAN

Stephen devised the plan of establishing in the West Indies an Official Registry of all the slaves on each plantation.³ By that means he thought that he could provide against the continual addition of smuggled slaves. His comrades seized eagerly upon the idea, and determined, as a beginning, to try out the scheme in Trinidad. They pressed their plan with 'many private interviews' and 'urgent remonstrances'⁴ and succeeded in January, 1812, in getting Perceval, the Prime Minister, to issue an Order-in-Council -

1. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 41.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 482.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 241-242.

George Stephen: Op.Cit. pp. 25-27.

Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, pp. 311-312.

4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 3.

prepared by Stephen¹ - authorizing an Official Registry of all slaves in Trinidad.²

Meanwhile the Sect had taken counsel with Romilly and Brougham, and had agreed to press for an Act of Parliament imposing a similar registration on all the West Indies. They resolved not to delay, and on January 6, 1812, they held a consultation and 'settled to proceed with Registry Bill this year'.³ But they found that it was no easy task to prepare such a Bill for Parliament, and still less easy to prepare Parliament for such a Bill. The Government expressed fears about interfering with colonial legislation; and, in a short time, Wilberforce had to inform Stephen of Perceval's judgement that

"it would be more prudent to wait till another year in order to see how the engine should work in Trinidad, and rectify any errors, supply any defects, etc. which experience should suggest".⁴

The next year (1813) however was occupied with the East India Charter; but after that battle and a brief holiday the Clapham Sect took up again their old interest. Wilberforce left his country house and repaired to James Stephen's to be present at a 'meeting of the African Institution, to settle West Indian matters with Macaulay, Grant, and the interior council'.⁵

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1. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 25.
Stephen was one of Perceval's closest personal friends.
 2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 3.
 3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 3.
 4. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 19-20.
 5. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 138.

EFFORTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL ACTION

However the Registry Bill might have fared, a new turn in world events shelved it altogether for a while. Napoleon at last was falling. In 1812 he had been defeated in Russia, in 1813 in Germany, and in 1814 in France. The dawning prospect of a general conference of the great powers suggested to the Saints a new possibility for an old plan. From the first they had been hoping for some international agreement to outlaw the slave trade; and, not without some valuable results, they had intermittently attempted to obtain action from other countries.¹ In 1808 Wilberforce had written to Jefferson in America;² and had advised Macaulay to have abolition pamphlets translated into Spanish.³ And in the same year when the Spanish and Portuguese Deputies came to England he had suggested to Macaulay and William Smith that it would be well 'to get pretty well acquainted with them' with a view to having them 'well impregnated with Abolitionism'.⁴ At the same time he kept a watchful eye on every action of his own country. To promote his cause he was ready to resort to 'friendly violence' against the government⁵; and he seemed able to make his power effective.

1. See Supra, pp. 43 & 68 Note 5.

2. Life of William Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 374.

3. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 384.

4. Ibid, Vol. 3, pp. 384-385.

5. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 133.

In 1810, it has been mentioned, Clapham influence helped to win important concessions from Portugal, and in 1813 it also helped to win from Sweden a complete repudiation of the slave trade.¹

An opportunity now appeared to supplement the individual gains by an international agreement to repudiate the trade. Wilberforce reproached himself for not 'having foreseen this conjuncture, and been prepared with works in all the modern languages against the Slave Trade'.² And he now called the whole brotherhood into vigorous action.

"We are much occupied", he wrote to Gisborne, "with the grand object of prevailing on all the great European powers to agree to a convention for the general Abolition of the Slave Trade".³ He judged that France would be favourable, and that Spain and Portugal would be 'compelled into assent'.⁴ The brotherhood therefore decided to concentrate on the new objective, and at a meeting of the African Institution Wilberforce, Stephen, Thornton, Macaulay, and William Smith joined in agreement

"to give up the Register Bill for the present, and to push for a convention for the general Abolition,...to negotiate with the foreign powers, and to forward the measure by

1. Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, p. 135.
"So strong a hold did Wilberforce have on the government that the slave trade sections of proposed treaties with foreign powers were submitted to him by Castlereagh for comment". Klingberg: Op.Cit., p. 136.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 177.
3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 175.
4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 175.

all means".¹

The first means employed was a letter from Wilberforce to the Emperor Alexander of Russia, who was urged, in terms calculated to flatter and to appeal, to lend his powerful influence to the cause.² This letter was followed by others to the Archbishop of Rheims, Baron Humboldt, and La Fayette.³

Writing letters was not all. On the eve of peace a motion was passed in the House of Commons which enjoined the cabinet to solicit from all the sovereigns of Europe the immediate abolition of the slave trade.⁴ But the Clapham Sect counted this as only the first step. They had no intention of trusting the matter to the decisions of cabinets and ambassadors.

"We have some dark plots in our heads", wrote Henry Thornton, "for influencing the Allied Powers in favour of the abolition of the slave trade through this earth of ours, which earth three or four potentates....of whom Lord Castlereagh is one, seem to hold in their hands".⁵

As Castlereagh, the British Ambassador, set out for Paris the Clapham Sect therefore proceeded with supplementary plans of their own. They had judged Castlereagh to be 'a fish of the cold-blooded kind'⁶, and they determined that it would be wise to establish more direct connections at Paris, the better to apply their influence. They decided consequently to appoint their own ambassador, who should

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 177.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 181.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 181-182.

4. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 398.

5. Colquhoun: Wilberforce and his Friends, p. 327.

6. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 2.

remain at Paris during the peace negotiations, to keep an eye on Castlereagh, to supply him with any needed information, and, by whatever means possible, to further their cause.¹ Their choice fell on Macaulay, whose encyclopaedic knowledge and sleepless diligence admirably fitted him for the task.² Macaulay therefore set out for Paris as "Anti-Slavery Ambassador" of the Clapham Sect.³ He remained there for some time and kept tirelessly on the trail of Castlereagh.⁴ But his mission was destined to failure. The French traders were so eager to grasp again the profits which the war had so long withheld from them that Castlereagh could not have achieved much, whatever his desire. But Macaulay thought that Castlereagh had been indifferent to the cause; and, in anger and disappointment, he returned to his friends, who all assembled at Henry Thornton's house to welcome him, and to hear the tale of his unsuccessful endeavours.⁵

Consequently when Castlereagh returned in general triumph, bearing a treaty otherwise satisfactory, the Clapham Sect lent no echo to the national rejoicing. And in the

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 183.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 183. Macaulay was a fluent and easy speaker of French. In case he had any spare time in Paris he was commissioned as a secondary office to form a Bible Society there.

G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 17.
A letter from Wilberforce to Lady Sparrow (May 3, 1814). MS in Wilberforce Museum at Hull.

3. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 47.

4. See two letters from Macaulay to Castlereagh, in Correspondence of Castlereagh, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, pp. 47-49.

5. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 314.

House of Commons, after the applause of Castlereagh had ceased, Wilberforce rose to protest that he could not join in the acclaim. "I cannot but conceive", he exclaimed, "that I behold in his hand the death-warrant of a multitude of innocent victims....whom I had fondly indulged the hope of having myself rescued from destruction".¹

Foiled at Paris the persistent Saints now turned their eyes to the approaching Congress of Vienna, in which they hoped to retrieve their defeat by a general charter of abolition. An unexpected opportunity for preliminary politics occurred when the Emperor Alexander of Russia visited England, and expressed a desire to meet Wilberforce. But the Emperor proved more affable than helpful, and dodged the blame for the small gains at Paris by saying, "What could be done when your own ambassador gave way?".²

The Saints grimly determined to make it less easy for Castlereagh to give way the next time. And they were at no loss what to do. They would send him to Vienna with a mandate so unmistakable that he would not be able to ignore it. They set to work therefore organizing another campaign to bring once more to their aid the force of public opinion.³

"Once more the crusader's call was heard all over England;

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 187.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 191.

3. "Let the nation loudly and generally express its deep disappointment and regret", said Wilberforce, referring to the Paris Treaty. "Our best hopes", he wrote again, "rest on the country's manifesting a general and strong feeling on the subject".

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 192.

and once more the response was prompt and overwhelming".¹ In thirty-four days, beginning June 27, 1814, there were sent to the House of Commons nearly eight hundred petitions bearing nearly one million signatures, a number at that time almost equal to one tenth of the entire population of the country.² The whole nation was roused by the passionate crusade. "I was not aware", wrote Wellington on returning to England, "of the degree of frenzy existing here about the slave trade".³ "The whole nation is bent upon the object", wrote Castlereagh, "I believe there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned upon it: both Houses of Parliament are pledged to press it: and the Ministers must make it the basis of their policy".⁴

The ministers, being given the word of England, did make the abolition of the trade the basis of their policy. Wellington in Paris, and Castlereagh in Vienna fought stubbornly to obtain an international repudiation of the trade. The Clapham Sect determined again that they would do well themselves to keep in close touch with affairs, and make use of their own thorough knowledge.

"You will concur with me", Wilberforce wrote to Macaulay, "that it may be well to furnish Lord Castlereagh with short notes like a lawyer's brief, on all the main

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 398-399.
2. Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, p. 146.
3. Halevy: England in 1815, p. 400.
4. Correspondence of Castlereagh, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, p. 73.

propositions on which the case of Abolition rests, or rather I mean of all the facts....I would abstain of course from any statements which might appear to him invidious...A copy of this paper may then be made for the Duke of Wellington, and also for any other of the foreign ministers.....Lord Castlereagh must also be provided with such a statement of the present situation of St. Domingo as will enable him to convince Talleyrand that the attempt to recover it by force will end in disgrace. Stephen can best draw up the account I mean".¹

The two toilers betook themselves anew to their labours. Stephen 'furnished copious details', and Macaulay amassed such a 'vast body of convincing proofs' that Wilberforce was delighted, and wrote to him, "I do not think that a grain can be added to the weight with which your zeal, diligence, and method in preserving your papers, have loaded the scale in our favour";² and even the Duke of Wellington - whom Macaulay sought out in a personal interview to fortify in advance with the Clapham arguments - exclaimed in admiration that he could 'not see how on earth' the French could 'elude the force of this evidence'.³

In addition to providing the ambassadors with facts and arguments the Clapham Sect proceeded with their characteristic propaganda. Wilberforce arranged further interviews with the Emperor Alexander, and also with the King of Prussia.⁴ He also corresponded diligently with prospective labourers in the cause: Cardinal Gonsalvi,

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 209-210.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 210-211.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 211.

4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 198.

Humboldt, Sisimondi, Chateaubriand, and Madam de Stael.¹ And he prepared another printed letter to Talleyrand, which he distributed as a manifesto of the Abolitionist party,² and which Castlereagh, at his behest, put into the hands of all the sovereigns represented at Vienna.³ Clarkson meanwhile visited Paris and arranged for a reprint of his translated History of the Abolition, and an Address to the representatives at Vienna,⁴ and Macaulay kept in watchful contact with both Wellington and Castlereagh.⁵

Yet once more all the labour seemed to be in vain. The decision lay with France; and France was openly hostile. Abolitionists there could not even get their letters in the newspapers.⁶ For an ancient ghost had risen again. The Royalists remembered that of old Abolition had been favoured by the revolutionaries; and now they did not trouble to draw nice distinctions. They still associated the freedom of the slaves with Jacobinism. "French Royalists", Lord Holland wrote to Wilberforce, "make no difference between you and me...and Tom Paine".⁷ Even worse, the French newspapers made it a point of national honour not to be persuaded by the English.⁸ Hence the total gain of all the

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 201-202.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 202.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 221.

4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 216. The British Critic later referred to Wellington, Canning, et. al. as "Agents of the African Institution". British Critic, 1823, p. 316.

5. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 314.

6. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 400.

7. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 213.

8. Coupland: Op.Cit., p. 400.

plans, the petitions, the letters, and the toil, was a reluctant admission by France to prohibit French slaving north of Cape Formosa.¹

But even this small gain was ground for hope. The Saints remembered the days not so long before when the cause had seemed so hopeless in England. "Depend upon it", Wilberforce reassured Macaulay, "we are gaining ground. God is with us".²

From what source help was to come the Saints little suspected. Napoleon suddenly returned from Elba, and, as a strategic bid for England's favour, proclaimed the immediate and total abolition of the French slave trade.³ Napoleon did not long remain in power to enforce his proclamation. But when British arms had restored Louis XVIII, British influence was too powerful to permit a repudiation of the policy once established. Castlereagh was soon thereafter able to report to Wilberforce an agreement for 'the unqualified Abolition of the Slave Trade throughout the dominions of France'.⁴

This was not all that the Clapham Sect had hoped for. They had hoped for such an agreement not only with France but with all the slave trading nations of Europe. Yet to have won even so much was a memorable victory. And beyond

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 402.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 218.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 224.
4. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 224.

peradventure the victory was due to the Clapham Sect.

"It is obvious", says the Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, "that without the unceasing efforts of Wilberforce and his friends, Castlereagh and his government would have accomplished but little. Their goodwill cannot of course be doubted; but they needed a spur to make them sufficiently active when other matters were pressing on their attention.....It cannot be doubted....that without the sustained and eager insistence of an organized public opinion in this country, the responsible statesmen would have allowed the iniquitous traffic to continue under the pretext that it was impossible to do otherwise".¹

THE 'REGISTRY BILL' AGAIN

As this campaign was drawing to a close another was being revived by the Saints. Before the defeat of Napoleon, it will be remembered, they had inaugurated a crusade to establish a Registry Bill throughout the West Indies.² At the prospect of international action on slave trading they had put aside their campaign for the Registry Bill. But they had not failed to keep in close touch with the colonies, and they had become increasingly aware that the illicit trade was thriving, not dying. They were at length convinced that without some system of registration all the gains of the Abolition Bill would be lost. On the 15th of February, 1815, at the House of the President of the African Institution, Wilberforce, Babington, James Stephen, and his son James, who was henceforth to be a tower of strength to the

1. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol. 1, p. 499.

2. See Supra, p. 193.

Abolitionists, met with some others, and, after a 'long discussion', 'resolved on pushing the Registry Bill immediately.'¹

Wilberforce thereupon proceeded to sound the government, which attempted to evade the question by saying that there was no actual proof of the alleged smuggling.² But Wilberforce and his group knew that the lack of supervision made proof impossible, and they were attempting to introduce a measure which would at once establish the proof and make possible the prohibition. Stephen, who had been often provoked by similar vacillations of the government flared into anger at this excuse, and, to express his resentment, resigned his seat in the House of Commons.³

The Saints however determined to proceed with the Bill, and Wilberforce, Macaulay, and Stephen, wrote pamphlets on the question. But they were finally persuaded by

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 243.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 244

George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 35-36.

3. Stephen was a 'high-minded fanatic'. Once before when the government was slack Stephen had declared "I had rather be on friendly terms with a man who had strangled my infant son than support an administration guilty of slackness in suppressing the slave trade". And in 1814 he had once exclaimed, "If Lord Castlereagh fails to redeem his pledge, may God not spare me, if I spare the noble Lord and his colleagues". Though Stephen left the House of Commons he allowed no slack to his anti-slavery labours, and within the next year he had written four pamphlets on the slave trade.

Leslie Stephen: Life of Fitz-James Stephen, p. 22.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 249.

Castlereagh that it would be wise to delay for a year, and make an effort to induce the colonies themselves to adopt the measure in their own legislature. They consequently decided to dismiss the Bill until the next year.¹

As in their earlier campaign in 1800 they found that it was easier to drop an unpopular measure than to take it up again. The next session, 1816, brought three added obstacles to the Bill. There had come from Barbadoes news of a Negro insurrection, which, in fact, had been but half-heartedly conducted, and was quickly suppressed, and horribly revenged; but which was none the less exploited to accuse the Saints of fomenting revolution by their propaganda.² Then, to aggravate the situation, the West Indians in England, who understood no less than the Saints the possibilities of a Registry Bill, had organized a powerful opposition, and were alarming the country by their lurid propaganda.³ And, finally, the Spanish government - influenced not a little by Clapham pamphlets and propaganda - had at last moved to end their slave trade, and the Saints feared that a defeat for them at home at such a time would injure their prestige abroad, and perhaps operate

1. Klingberg: Anti-Slavery Movement in England, pp. 173-174. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 249.

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 286-288. Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 456.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 286-288, 304-305. "I am assured", Wilberforce had written to Macaulay a little earlier, "that they (the West Indians) are mustering all their forces and all their natural allies against us, with the most assiduous diligence, and systematic array..Remember we were challenged to prove that the abuses we charge do really exist. Do consider about getting evidence from the West Indians against the next session". The West Indians even laid a voluntary tax upon every hogshead of sugar to raise funds to oppose the Registry Bill. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 263-264, 304.

against them in the Spanish Cabinet¹ So Wilberforce held a consultation with Stephen, Macaulay, William Smith, and other abolition supporters, and decided that it would be well to quiet the home opposition by ceasing to press for the Registry Bill.²

The next year, 1817, another obstacle arose to delay the Bill still further. A period of severe depression was causing wide-spread distress in England, and, in the face of destitution among English workmen, Wilberforce hesitated to urge the plight of the Negroes. Early in the year he expressed his ideas in a letter to Macaulay,

"I have for some time been unwillingly yielding to a secret suggestion that it would be better perhaps to lie upon our ears in the Registry Bill, and West Indian cause. When parliament meets, the whole nation, depend upon it, will be looking up for relief from its own burdens, and it would betray an ignorance of all tact to talk to them in such circumstances of the suffering of the slaves in the West Indies. We should especially guard against appearing to have a world of our own, and to have little sympathy with the sufferings of our countrymen".³

So the Saints dropped the Registry Bill, and never took it up again in parliament. But they finally achieved their purpose in an indirect way. During the years in which the Bill had not been brought into parliament they had been exerting their personal influence to make the government urge upon the colonies the duty of themselves estab-

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.4,pp. 285-286.

"Depend upon it", Wilberforce wrote to Stephen, "the loud cry of ...that we were fomenting insurrection among the slaves, would operate powerfully against us in the Spanish Cabinet".

2. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 286.

3. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 307.

lishing a registry of slaves. And, as a nominal concession to the mother country, the colonial legislatures gradually passed Registry Acts of their own. In the colonies, of course, these Acts remained quite innocuous. But in 1819 the Secretary of the Colonies adroitly achieved the whole purpose of the discarded Registry Bill. He introduced a measure to consolidate the different colonial acts by combining a duplicate Registry in England.¹ Having admitted the principle the colonies could not escape this later measure, and in this indirect manner, 'after seven years of incessant labour and anxiety', especially on the part of Stephen and Macaulay, the Clapham Sect obtained the measure for which they had been so long contending.²

THE MOVE FOR EMANCIPATION

The Registry Act came into force on January 1, 1820, and marked the beginning of the end.³ An accurate registry

1. As early as 1815 Stephen had foreseen such a move, and wrote to the Earl of Bathurst, "Without a duplicate registry here....and without public access to that registry, it would be worse than useless". (Report on the Manuscripts of Earl Bathurst, Quoted in Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, p. 173.
2. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 37. Wilberforce wrote to Macaulay, "No one has more right than you to be congratulated for no one has done or suffered so much as yourself in and for this great cause". Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p.315.
3. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 312. The registry "not only gave the finishing stroke to the Slave Trade Abolition and Felony Acts, but happily laid a foundation for those awful statistics of slavery which proved the battle-axe of Mr. Fowell Buxton in his many fearful contests for its total abolition". George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp.18-19.

involved investigation; and investigation revealed in horrible colours all the facts that had previously been suspected but could not be proved. Gradually the abolitionists became convinced that the evils of slavery which they had tried so earnestly to eliminate were not incidental but inherent, and would not, and could not, be cured until slavery itself was abolished.

The Clapham Sect well knew that that conviction would involve them in a battle as stiff as any they had yet encountered. To abolish the property rights which the slaves represented was obviously a much more serious step than simply to prohibit the spoliation of Africa, and the importation, instead of the propagation, of new slaves. For at the earlier campaign some of the planters themselves had become convinced that importation was no longer necessary, and that the planters would be just as well off by breeding their own slaves as by importing others from Africa. But to set all the slaves free was a different matter. That would seem preposterous not only to the West Indians but to most Englishmen. But a little while before it would have seemed preposterous to most abolitionists.¹ Many of the slaves in the West Indies had come from wild and savage tribes, and were difficult to control and to work. Their

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 286-288 and 365-366.
Parliamentary Debates, Second Series, Vol. viii, 628-629;
 ix, 143, 144, 146.

owners, not without reason, believed that if these slaves were once free from compulsion they would retire to the mountains, where they would revert to their wild state, and, in their overwhelming numbers, become a peril to the tiny white population.¹ Even in England the Duke of Wellington expressed apprehension that emancipation might create the necessity of sending troops to exterminate the blacks.²

But the Clapham Sect had more faith in the Negroes, a faith that, while perhaps too rosy, was, as subsequent events proved, not without knowledge of the Negro nature. And, at any rate, the Clapham Sect were thoroughly convinced that slavery was too inherently wicked and unjust to be permitted under the protection of the British flag.

In 1821, therefore, the war-scarred veterans girded themselves for their last struggle, a struggle which would be quite different from the others. The old ranks had been broken. Henry Thornton, Granville Sharp, and John Venn, had all passed away.³ And, with the old ties breaking, the others had gradually moved from Clapham till now only common interests, and common labours, and the bonds of family and of long friendship, still kept the aging group

1. Lascelles: Granville Sharp, pp. 60-62. and cf. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 21-22.

"Actual emancipation was a grand concession to humanity which I firmly believe that the most sanguine abolitionist never contemplated in 1813".

2. Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, p. 274.

3. See Infra, pp. 228-229.

together. Even those who were left could no longer lead the battle as was their wont. Wilberforce, always in ill health, was now over sixty years of age, and utterly unable to undertake the management of another Parliamentary campaign.

Consultations were therefore held to select a successor on whom the mantle of Wilberforce might be laid. The choice fell on Thomas Fowell Buxton, a young Member of Parliament, who some years before had won the heart of Wilberforce by his heroic efforts for the poor weavers of Spitalfields, and by his labours for penal reform.¹ On May 24th Wilberforce wrote to Buxton formally offering him the leadership of his 'holy enterprise'.² Buxton had long been interested in the anti-slavery movement, and the offer of succeeding Wilberforce was a tempting honour to a young man of thirty-five. Yet the responsibilities attached to that leadership were so serious that

1. In 1816 after Buxton's speech on behalf of the Spitalfields weavers Wilberforce had written him a letter almost prophetic. After expressing pleasure at the work for 'the hungry and the naked' Wilberforce continued.. "It is partly a selfish feeling, for I anticipate the success of the efforts which I trust you will one day make in other instances, in an assembly in which I trust we shall be fellow-labourers". And in 1817 when Buxton published his work on Prison Discipline Wilberforce wrote again, "I hope you will come soon into Parliament...and be able to contend in person, as well as with your pen, for the rights and happiness of the oppressed and friendless. I claim you as an ally in this blessed league". Buxton, like Wilberforce, was an Evangelical. His mother and wife were both Quakers; and he was the brother-in-law of Elizabeth Fry. His first public speech was at a meeting of an auxiliary Bible Society. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 65 Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, pp. 116-117.
2. The rather long letter is quoted in full in Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, pp. 103-104.

it was not until the autumn, after Wilberforce and Macaulay had gone to him for a personal interview, that he decided to throw in his lot with the older men and assume the leadership of 'an alliance' that might 'truly be termed holy'.¹

His successor secured, Wilberforce now began to outline the course of the campaign. In December he appealed again to Buxton. "My idea is, that a little before parliament meets, three or four of us should have a secret cabinet council, wherein we could deliberate and decide what course to pursue".² Buxton, infected with the true Clapham spirit, replied that a 'Congress on the subject'³ might be held early in January. Accordingly on the eighth of that month Buxton and Macaulay went to Wilberforce's house to discuss the plan of operations for the approaching season. Wilberforce proposed a 'serious talk of the interior cabinet',⁴ and there followed 'long and deep...deliberations how best to shape those measures which were to change the structure of society throughout the western world!'.⁵

The initial leadership was still left with Wilberforce. For all hope of success lay in rousing once more a great

1. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, pp. 104-106.

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 157.

3. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 158.

4. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 163.

5. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 160.

Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 108.

public agitation.¹ And among the English public the name of Wilberforce still carried a magic that belonged to no other. Even before the cabinet council, therefore, Wilberforce had decided to prepare the way for the campaign by publishing his slavery manifesto, as he had, years before, published his religious manifesto. He had commenced the preparation of the manifesto on the day on which Buxton and Macaulay called on him;² and thereafter kept working at it throughout the winter. But writing was never his forte, and he now found it more difficult than ever. He sighed for his 'white Negroes' of the former days, and at one time Stephen thought of going to help him speed the drudgery of research, but concluded that Wilberforce might better be allowed to proceed at his own pace.³ Aided somewhat by the criticism of William Smith⁴ Wilberforce therefore laboured by himself; and early in March, 1823, published his Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity

1. Wilberforce always relied on winning the moral sentiment of the people at large. In 1816 he had declared his belief that they would finally accord him victory, "I rely upon the religion of the people of this country - because the people of England are religious and moral, loving justice and hating iniquity, they consider the oppressed as their brethren whatever be their complexion". And in 1822 he wrote in his diary, "we must now call on all good men throughout the kingdom to join us in abolishing this wicked system, and striving to render the degraded race by degrees a free peasantry". Much earlier Stephen had said, "We shall do nothing effectual to check colonial crimes till we blazen them to the English public, and arm ourselves with popular indignation". Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, pp. 241, 291 Vol. 5, pp. 158-159.
2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 162.
3. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 160.
4. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 161.

of the Inhabitants of the British Empire in Behalf of the Slaves in the West Indies.¹

The Appeal had wide popularity and important influence; but, naturally, it was only a preliminary. The Saints would not feel at home in any campaign without a Society and a variety of Committees. They already had the African Institution, which in some of their labours had done them much service. But for their present purposes the African Institution was handicapped by its very advantages. It was heavily weighted with high patronage, and for a long time had been very conservative - entirely too conservative to be of much use in heading a vigorous crusade. It had put a ban on publication, it disapproved of public meetings, and it had a strong dislike for popular agitation. It had served its purpose; but in the new campaign it promised to be of but dubious advantage.²

Zachary Macaulay, therefore, devised an institution nearer to their hearts' desire: The London Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, known more briefly as the London Anti-Slavery Society.³ This Society showed that the survivors of the Clapham Sect were still active in anti-slavery la-

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 168.
2. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 798.
Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 382-385.
3. Christian Observer, 1839, p. 798
Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 384-385.
Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, pp. 92-93.

bours. Its Vice-Presidents soon included Babington, Buxton, Clarkson, Smith, Stephen, and Wilberforce; while Zachary Macaulay, with his son Thomas Babington, served on the Committee.¹ Under this direction the Society began to organize publicity for the campaign. It circulated Wilberforce's Appeal and a pamphlet by Clarkson,² and it requested Stephen to finish a work he had undertaken on the legal aspects of slavery, and thus secured the publication of the first volume of Slavery Delineated,³ which for the next ten years was a handbook for all anti-slavery workers.

Shortly afterward came the opportunity to commence the campaign in Parliament. The Quakers, ever in the vanguard, had prepared a petition praying Parliament to take measures to redeem the slaves.⁴ With the object of sounding the House and estimating prospects Wilberforce made an address and presented the petition.⁵ He did not make a very propitious beginning. "Fatigue rather stupefied me",

1. The Report of the Committee of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, 1824.
2. Ibid. and Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. 1, p. 128. See Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, p. 245.
3. Slavery Delineated, Vol. 1, Preface p. iii. The first volume dealt with the legal aspects of slavery and showed what the abolitionists were now urging: the inhumanity of the system apart from the uncertain equation of the owner. The second volume was published in 1830, and dealt less with the law than practice. Macaulay referred to the work as, 'Stephen's mighty book which marks the hand of a giant'. Stephen however could see in West Indians only evil, and that continually. Mathieson calls Stephen 'the most learned, bitter, and extreme of anti-slavery pamphleteers'. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 134. Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, p. 227.
4. Buxton: Op.Cit., p. 111. Parliamentary Debates, New Series, viii, 624-630.
5. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 170.

he reported, "and I forgot the most important points".¹

In addition Canning, then leader of the House, outgeneraled him and sidetracked the question without discussion. Wilberforce, who had been preparing topics for reply, was quite confounded. "Never almost in my life was I so vexed by a parliamentary proceeding. I felt as if God had forsaken me, whom just before I had invoked".²

Despite the initial reverse the war had at least been declared. After Wilberforce had finished Buxton rose for his maiden effort as leader, and gave notice that he would submit a motion about the state of slavery in the British colonies. When the debate commenced, on the 15th of May, Buxton stated explicitly the new goal of the party.

"The object at which we aim is the extinction of slavery - nothing less than the extinction of slavery, - in nothing less than the whole of the British dominions: not, however, the rapid termination of that state;...but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as, by slow degrees, and in a course of years, first fitting and qualifying the slaves for the enjoyment of freedom, shall gently conduct us to the annihilation of slavery".³

This statement might be considered reasonably temperate; but Canning judged it necessary to add still another qualification, 'with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property'.⁴ Canning, indeed, again took the wind out of their sails; for he cleverly introduced a series of resolutions that went farther than the government

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 171.

2. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 171.

3. Parliamentary Debates, New Series, ix, 265.

4. Ibid, ix, 286.

was expected to go, and yet involved a dismissal of any thought of early emancipation. Wilberforce, who had been selected to answer Canning, was again non-plussed. On the spur of the moment he decided to compromise, and thus make sure of Canning's concessions. "I thank God", he wrote to his son later, "I judged rightly that it would not be wise to press for more on that night".¹

While progress was slowly made in parliament parallel labours were conducted without. Cabinet councils at Wilberforce's became the order of the day. The 'conspirators' gathered for consultations of the 'interior Cabinet', and busy labourers crowded Wilberforce's breakfast table until they reminded him again of the 'old bustle' of the abolition days.² In fact the old campaign routine again returned. There were letters to be written, interviews to be arranged, campaign literature to be distributed,³ public meetings to be planned, speeches to be delivered;⁴ and once

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 178.

2. Ibid, Vol. 5, pp. 163 and 180.

3. Macaulay now compiled from official colonial records a "Picture of Negro Slavery", a picture in colours of such 'horrid brilliancy' as only Macaulay could have so accurately and terribly drawn. For the rest of the campaign this book combined with Stephen's Slavery Delineated as source material for anti-slavery orators.

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 387.

Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 89.

4. In 1824 at the first Anniversary of the new London Anti-Slavery Society, at which William Smith, Wilberforce, and Buxton spoke, T.B. Macaulay gave his first anti-slavery address, and brought 'probably the happiest half-hour of Zachary Macaulay's life'. Zachary however 'took it in his own sad way', and commented on it to his son afterwards only to chide him for having folded his arms in the presence of royalty. (The Duke of Gloucester had been in the chair).

Proceedings of the First Anniversary Meeting etc. 1824.
G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, pp. 110-112.

more came the old business of 'stirring up petitions'. But the Saints had served a long apprenticeship in agitation, and they had helped to prepare a responsive public. "The country takes up our cause surprisingly", Wilberforce noted, "the petitions, considering the little effort, very numerous".¹

The even tenor of the movement was abruptly disturbed by untoward events in the West Indies. The planters, angered at some minor regulations which Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, had despatched to them, indulged in such ungoverned language that the slaves, overhearing, thought that an order for emancipation must have arrived, and that the masters were defying it. A mild insurrection resulted, in which little damage was done and no white person was killed. But all the repressed fury of the owners was vented on the poor slaves. Troops were sent against them, and killed large numbers of the hapless crowds, numbers more were court-martialled, and executed, and five were sentenced to the ghastly torture of one thousand lashes apiece.²

The first reports that reached England came from the planters, and the distorted accounts laid the responsibility for the whole trouble on the Abolitionists in England, and for a while brought the emancipation movement into bad repute. But the truth gradually became known, and the consequent revulsion dealt a terrible blow to slavery. For the planters had not only murdered slaves, but, by hearsay evidence and connived perjury, their court sentenced to death a Methodist missionary named Smith, a

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 177.

2. Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 481-482.

Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, pp. 126-131.

really noble gentleman, who in many ways had been in sympathy with the Negroes, but who had done much to keep them in restraint. Smith was not executed, but he soon died from the purposely unhealthy condition of his prison.¹

The Clapham Sect were outraged at the tragedy. "Had I happened for instance to correspond with Smith", Wilberforce said, "that alone would have hanged him".² Wilberforce had just suffered a severe illness, and was in weaker condition than ever. But he was eager to get to parliament once more to raise his voice in condemnation of the deed. "I very much wish", he wrote to Stephen, "if my voice should be strong enough, to bear my testimony against the scandalous injustice exercised upon poor Smith".³ On the day when the debate was to be resumed in parliament he 'went to Stephen's to be quiet for three or four hours' in preperation, and then proceeded to the House.⁴ But he was in poor condition. Again his memory failed him. "I quite

1. Smith's death dealt slavery a blow from which it never recovered. Before it, for all the hopes of the Saints, the agitation had not taken hold of the country as a whole. But Brougham brought the case to parliament in a speech of tremendous power, and outside parliament 'filled the sails of the abolitionist movement with the great winds of a popular agitation'.

G.M.Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p.253. There are good accounts of the Smith case in:

Harriett Martineau: History of the Peace, Vol. 1, p. 465.

Mathieson: British Slavery and its Abolition, pp. 141-146.

Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, pp. 219- 223.

Coupland, Wilberforce, pp. 487-490.

Parliamentary Debates, New Series, xi, 961-999. (Brougham's speech)

2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.5, p. 222. In 1825 another Methodist missionary, Mr Shrewsbury from Barbadoes, was threatened with hanging, and in danger of his life, it being urged that among other iniquities he had actually corresponded with Mr Buxton. Buxton: Memoirs of Buxton, p. 134.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.5, p. 222.
4. Ibid, Vol. 5, p.222.

forgot my topics", he lamented, "and made sad work of it".¹
 Yet he rejoiced that he had had an opportunity of adding
 his protest to the iniquity. "I have delivered my soul",
 he said.²

It was well that he had 'delivered his soul'. That
 speech was the last he ever made in parliament. Ten days
 later he was seized with another attack of illness, which
 left him so impaired in strength that, not without anxious
 consultations with the brotherhood, he made the 'very pain-
 ful' decision to retire from public life.³ Accordingly he
 applied for the Chiltern Hundreds - "the first place", he
 said, "that I ever asked for myself"⁴ - and, amid the sorrow-
 ful regrets of the Saints, took his departure from Parlia-
 ment. William Smith said that their 'guiding spirit' would
 be gone. And Buxton recalled the inscription which the Car-
 thaginians placed upon the tomb of Hannibal, "We vehemently
 desired him in the day of battle".⁵

THE LAST YEARS

Though Wilberforce had retired from Parliament, the
 end of the Clapham Sect was not yet. Stephen and Macaulay
 were labouring as prodigiously as ever. Stephen acted as
 Solicitor for the Anti-Slavery Society, and followed up his

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 222.
2. G.W.E. Russell: History of the Evangelical Movement, p. 39.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, pp. 228, 229, 230, 233-234.
4. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 238.
5. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 239.

Slavery Delineated with an address to the electors of England, entitled, England Enslaved by her Own Slave Colonies. Macaulay supplied information for Clarkson,¹ and still had much to do with the organization of the campaign, and he pursued his labour with all the old Clapham thoroughness. In September, 1825, he wrote to Babington that he had just finished his analysis of the parliamentary papers of the last session. He followed this by outlining the anti-slavery plans for the next session. Brougham, he said, was to get an Order-in-Council for Trinidad; Lushington was to prevent the deportation of the free people of colour from the islands; MacIntosh was to defend Hayti; Buxton to present a new plan for Emancipation, and to expose the slave trade, and slavery in Mauritius. And, as ever, a systematic agitation was to be maintained in England,

"We are to prepare forthwith a pithy address ready to be printed in every newspaper in the kingdom the moment the Dissolution is announced, rousing the electors to require pledges. We are forthwith to prepare our correspondents everywhere for petitioning on the meeting of Parliament, and a Meeting will be held in London about a month before to give the tone and the example. The Speeches will furnish argument to the country; the Resolutions models. Wherever it may be prudent to do so, public meetings will be held in the large towns, and reports of the speeches put in the provincial papers".²

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 441.

2. Ibid, p. 431.

The following undated letter from Stephen to Macaulay is another illustration of the extraordinary devices to which the brotherhood would resort to further their causes.

"I send you some Abolition puffs which I think may be useful, and some of which perhaps the newspapers will take without payment. But pray take care to have them copied in different hands, and sent by unknown messengers. I think if they were dropped in the boxes of newspapers they might be inserted, or if published in the Times the rest would copy them".

Macaulay, moreover, added to these labours a more individual task of his own. He had been contributing articles on slavery to the Christian Observer;¹ but in 1825 he undertook a new departure. He founded the Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, a small paper published usually twice a month, and comprising from June, 1825 to July, 1836, a total of 113 issues,² of which he himself was 'the sole and most prolific parent'.³ These Reporters were compiled and written at once with painstaking thoroughness and stark realism. Through the last years of the Emancipation struggle they maintained a never failing supply of constantly up-to-date material about the workings of the slave trade, which proved an invaluable source for all anti-slavery workers, and had powerful influence both on the public and on the government.⁴ They represented a labour possible only to a man with encyclopaedic knowledge of colonial slavery, with fluent pen, and with extraordinary powers of application. The anti-slavery campaign witnessed many instances of titanic drudgery; but certainly none to surpass the sustained production of the Anti-Slavery Reporter.

1. Christian Observer, 1839, pp. 799 and 804.
2. The complete series are in the library of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society.
3. This was Hannah More's description. It is probable however that Zachary Macaulay at times did have some assistance in his work. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 440.
Christian Observer, 1839, p. 803.
4. Knutsford: Op.Cit., p. 385.
Christian Observer, 1839, p. 803.

Wilberforce, too, was still a power in the campaign. After his retirement from Parliament he was unable to engage actively in public labour; but his influence counted for much. As late as 1830 he heard from Brougham in Yorkshire, "The election turned very much on Slavery; your name was in every mouth and your health the most enthusiastically received".¹ Moreover, though he intended never to come into public again, his interest in emancipation was too great to allow him to fulfil his intention. In December, 1826, his old friends pressed him to come to London for the annual meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. "Above all", Macaulay wrote to him, "we feel the loss of you. Heart-stirring occasions are in prospect, when I should have delighted to see you engaged cominus ense".² Wilberforce was reluctant to take any prominent part - "It seems", he wrote to Babington, "like wishing to retain the reins when I can no longer hold them". And to Stephen he expressed himself in similar vein³-, but his companions would have no refusal, and when the meeting was called Wilberforce was in the chair.⁴

Again in the critical year 1830 the friends appealed to Wilberforce to lend his aid by appearing once more at the

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 318.
2. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 262.
3. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 263.
4. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 263.

annual meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. A large audience gathered, as 'all the old friends of the cause' assembled around Wilberforce.¹ The venerable Clarkson moved that 'the great leader of our cause' should take the chair; and Wilberforce responded with a tribute to his old 'friend and fellow-labourer', and a reminiscence of the early days when they were beginning their campaign.²

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 317.

Coupland: Wilberforce, p. 503.

2. At this meeting the younger and more radical members of the Abolitionists, headed by George Stephen, broke away from the parent society and formed the Agency Committee - so called because it organized paid agents to lecture throughout England. The Agency Committee organized perhaps the first publicity campaign in the modern manner. They furnished notes and materials for their lecturers, and gave them minute instructions, even for such details as handling interruptions in meetings. They placarded London with billboards, indeed 'kept a little army of bill-stickers' who moved around and covered up the posters of their enemies. They posted lists of candidates in the parliamentary elections, marked Antis, Doubtful, and Recommended with perfect confidence. (There is a specimen in the British Museum under Colonial Slavery - Gladstone's name being among the Antis.) On one occasion they surprised friends and opponents alike by having contingent arrangements for the calling of a mass meeting all laid away waiting for an emergency. They released this at a decisive moment and summoned as by magic a great mass meeting at Exeter Hall, in which 66 members of Parliament appeared on the platform and agreed to vote as directed. Whatever one may think of their method one must agree that it was for such a time an extraordinary development of public agitation. Daniel O'Connell said to young George Stephen, "I have served a long apprenticeship to agitation, my young friend, but you are my master". It is significant that the young insurgents won the favour of the older Clapham men. James Stephen was with them from the start and Wilberforce and Macaulay both added their approval.

George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 184, 136 ff., 203-206, 245.

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp. 453, 467.

But the end was drawing near. In 1832 James Stephen died, his last public act being to preside at the annual meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society.¹ Macaulay was now the only active worker of the group.² He was toiling on with an industry that never flagged. In 1832 his daughter wrote, "Papa is extremely busy from 3 A.M. till 12 P.M. about this West Indian Committee. Mr. Buxton comes to see him every day".³ Wilberforce, too weak to labour, kept in touch with his old friend and cheered him on in his work. "I congratulate you", he wrote Macaulay on New Year's day, 1833, "on having entered a year which I trust will be distinguished by your seeing at last the mortal stroke given to the accursed Slave Trade, and the Emancipation of the West Indian slaves at length accomplished".⁴

The prospect, which now actually seemed to be dawning, of seeing the final end of the fifty years' campaign against slavery, so stirred Wilberforce that, though two years earlier he had 'resolved never more to speak in public' he consented again to be present at an Abolition meeting at Maidstone.⁵ So he came out of his retirement, and, twelve weeks before his death, went to the platform for what proved to be his last words in public. 'It was an affecting sight', said his

1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 470.

2. Ibid, p. 470.

3. Ibid, p. 466.

4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 352.

5. Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 352.

sons.¹ His tiny crooked frame, almost buried beneath his cloak, seemed smaller and frailer than ever. "I had not thought", he said, "to appear again in public; but it shall never be said that William Wilberforce is silent while the slaves require his help".² As he proceeded with his speech the fire of his lifelong devotion burst, as of old, into flame. Something of the earlier spirit seemed again to take possession of the feeble body, and his voice was 'restored again to some of that clarion character which had aroused slumbering parliaments'.³ Then, by a strange coincidence, as he was concluding his address a gleam of sunshine suddenly lit up the hall, as another gleam had lit up the House of Commons forty-two years before when Pitt was finishing his first great speech on slavery. And Wilberforce, catching the gleam and weaving it into his speech as Pitt had done on that distant morning, exclaimed that this 'light from heaven' was their 'earnest of success'.⁴

The 'earnest of success' was not false. In a short time the Emancipation Bill had passed its second reading with a majority that made its final passage secure. "Thank God", said Wilberforce, "that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty million sterling for the Abolition of Slavery".⁵ Meanwhile Zachary

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.5, p.353.
2. Wheeler: The Slaves' Champion, p.97.
3. Ibid, p. 97.
4. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.5, p. 354.
5. Ibid, Vol. 5, p.370.

Macaulay had been taken very ill, and, though he afterward recovered he was too sick to take notice of it when the goal of his life was achieved.¹ Wilberforce, who had made a temporary improvement, expected to be able to see the full consummation. But he was older than Macaulay, and, in a sudden relapse, on the 29th of July died, almost in the moment of victory.²

"It is a singular fact", said Buxton afterwards, "...that on the very night on which we successfully engaged in the House of Commons, in passing the clause of the Act of Emancipation - one of the most important clauses ever enacted, ... the spirit of our friend left the world. The day which saw the termination of his labours saw also the termination of his life".³

This chapter need further note only that as the conversion of Wilberforce marks the genesis of the Clapham Sect, so his death marks at once the achievement of its greatest purpose, and its final dissolution.

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1. Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p. 471.
 2. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 5, p. 373.
 3. Wheeler: The Slaves' Champion, p. 97.

Chapter 7

THE CLAPHAM SECT, AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH HISTORY

The passing of the Emancipation Act, and the death of Wilberforce marked the end of the Clapham Sect. The original ranks had been gradually thinning, and the few survivors had reached almost the end of their labours. Macaulay and Clarkson, indeed, were to live for a few years more, but the campaigns were over. The old gatherings, the 'Cabinet Councils', the eager planning, the apportioned and disciplined labours, the passionate crusades, could be no more. Nearly fifty years had passed since the labours had begun, and even Macaulay, the youngest of the band, was now an old man.

Granville Sharp had been the oldest. He was born in 1735. Then came Grant in 1746;¹ Shore and Charles Elliott in 1751; William Smith in 1756; Stephen, Babington, and Gisborne in 1758; Simeon, Venn, and Wilberforce in 1759; Clarkson and Thornton in 1760; and Macaulay, youngest of all, in 1768.²

The first break in the circle had come in 1813 in the midst of the great fight over the East India Bill. John Venn and Granville Sharp had died within a few weeks of each other.³

1. Hannah More, if she must be counted as one of the 'great men', was born in 1745. D.N.B. Sub Nom.
2. To avoid a multiplicity of references to various biographies it may be said that all these dates are given in the Dictionary of National Biography, except those for Charles Elliott and Babington which are given respectively in The Venn Family Annals, p. 108, and Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p.621.
3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 4, p. 132. Christian Observer, 1813. Edward Eliot died in 1797, really before the Clapham Sect had got well into action. Henry Martyn died in 1812.

Sharp had always been a little separated from the others. His knowledge and industry had made him a useful ally, and his uncommonly winsome spirit endeared him to all. But he was 'rather the confidant and counsellor ... than the comrade-in-arms',¹ and, while by his busy pen he lent aid to many Claphamic enterprises, he probably took little part in the parliamentary manoeuvres. John Venn, nearer in age to the others, was an unquestioned member of the innermost circle. He 'prompted the deeper meditations, partook the counsels, and stimulated the efforts'² of all the brotherhood.

Two years later (1815) another break came, when Henry Thornton, gracious host and sagacious financier, succumbed to a slow attack of pulmonary consumption.³ Then in 1823, at the very beginning of the Emancipation struggle, the circle was further narrowed by the passing of Charles Grant; and in 1832, at the end of the struggle, two more gaps were created by the deaths of James Stephen and his Clapham friend Charles Elliott. In 1833, the year of triumph, Wilberforce passed away; to be followed in the same year by Hannah More, in 1834 by Lord Teignmouth, in 1835 by William Smith, in 1836 by Charles Simeon, in 1837 by Thomas Babington, and in 1838 by Zachary Macaulay.

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p.249.

2. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p.559.

3. Charles Buchanan caught cold at Henry Thornton's funeral and died a few weeks later.

Thomas Clarkson was the last survivor. In 1840 he was present at a great anti-slavery convention, and he lived until 1846.¹

THE CLAPHAM SECT AT HOME

The hurry of their campaigns has admitted no opportunity to tell of the home life of these folk of the 'sanctified villa'² of Clapham.³ Indeed, the first impression left by a reading of their biographies is that home life was all but submerged in ceaseless activities, endless

1. Again to save references it may be said that all these facts are in the respective articles in D.N.B., save those for Elliott (The Venn Family Annals, p.108), and Babington (Charles Hole: Early History of the C.M.S., p.621).
 2. Tom Ingoldsby -quoted in the London Times, January 31, 1879.
 3. The Thornton's lived at Clapham permanently. Granville Sharp seems to have been their neighbour for a period which his Memoirs neglect to mention, (see Chapter one). Wilberforce began to live at Clapham in 1786 as the guest of John Thornton. When John Thornton died in 1792, Wilberforce lived with Henry till 1797, when they both were married. Wilberforce then took another house on Thornton's estate, the house in which their friend Edward Eliot had lived. Wilberforce, however, had several houses, one of which in Palace Yard was the London headquarters of the Sect during parliamentary campaigns. In 1808 Wilberforce gave up his house in Clapham, and took one at Kensington Gore, a mile from Hyde Park, where he had as neighbours just Stephen, and, later Macaulay, who moved so as to be near Wilberforce. Macaulay went to Clapham in 1803 and stayed till 1819. Lord Teignmouth, following his maxim 'seek a neighbour before you seek a house', went to Clapham in 1802 and remained till 1808. James Stephen lived at Clapham for some period not revealed in any available literature about him. William Smith lived in Clapham in the early years of the 19th Century. And John Venn went to Clapham in 1793, and remained till his death in 1813. During his first two years he had with him his father Henry Venn, the early Evangelical and Clapham curate.
- Life of Wilberforce, Vol.1, pp.373-374; Vol.3, p.395, et passim.
Morris: Life of Grant, pp.181, 226, 227, 269.
Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, pp.274, 332, 465.
Teignmouth: Life of Lord Teignmouth, Vol.2, p.2
Venn Family Annals, pp.108, 112, 127.
Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biographies, passim.

engagements, and innumerable visitors. Even when Wilberforce had a house at Kensington Gore he was sometimes unable to be there from Monday morning till Saturday night.¹ But the whole life of the Clapham Sect was not comprised in their many crusades. In spite of multifarious interests they centred their lives around their homes. None of the brotherhood forgot either family or brotherhood, nor failed to provide seasons for both.² And the home life of the group was happy and healthy to a rare degree. Their homes, indeed, could not quite escape the shadow of the brotherhood, and were deliberately used to perpetuate the 'Clapham System'.³ But it is only a travesty which represents the men of Clapham as being made stern and gloomy by an austere religion. They were stern with themselves, and carried on their inner struggles with the earnestness of saints. But stern inward dealings with their own shortcomings did not make them sour with others. Those who knew them best, such as

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol.1, p.255. Harford: Recollections, p.97. Correspondence of Wilberforce, Vol.2, p. 178.

2. Cf. the following extract from Wilberforce's diary, 1805. "A residence near London would withdraw me from company, and give me more time. Yet I dread the separation which my leaving Broomfield would make from my chief friends, the Thorntons, Teignmouths, Stephens, Venn, Macaulay, with whom I now live like a brother."

Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p. 235.

3. Cf. the following typical and amusing letter from Henry Thornton to Charles Grant, "On the whole I am in hopes some good may come of our Clapham system. Wilberforce is a candle that should not be hid under a bushel. The influence of his conversation is, I think, great and striking. I am surprised to find how much religion everybody seems to have when they get into our house. They all seem to submit, and to acknowledge the advantage of a religious life, and we are not at all queer or guilty of carrying things too far."

Morris: Life of Grant, p. 200.

Stephen and Colquhoun, emphasize an unusual happiness as a striking feature of their family life.¹ In the Clapham mansions, says G.O.Trevelyan, 'there was plenty of freedom, and good fellowship, and reasonable enjoyment for young and old alike There can have been little that was narrow and nothing vulgar in the training that produced Samuel Wilberforce, and Sir James Stephen, and Charles and Robert Grant, and Lord Macaulay'.²

THE CLAPHAM SECT AND THE CHURCH

Emphasis on family life was only natural. It was a feature of Evangelical religion; and the Clapham Sect were ardent Evangelicals, whose religion was the central spring of all their lives. They were what Wilberforce would call 'true Christians', who knew what it was to practise 'saintliness in daily life', and by whom the minutest details of action were 'considered with reference to Eternity'.³ They

1. See Appendix two; and the comment by the Reverend Wm. Knight in The Missionary Secretariat of Henry Venn, p.5 that in the Clapham rectory was a 'sunny cheerfulness' to be found in few family circles.
2. G. O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p.62. Among other famous Clapham children were Henry Venn, the great C.M.S. secretary; Charlotte Elliott - daughter of Charles Elliott - who wrote, "Just As I Am Without One Plea"; and Robert Grant who wrote, "O Worship the King" and "Saviour When in Dust To Thee". A granddaughter of William Smith was Miss Florence Nightingale. G. O. Trevelyan justly observes, "Hobson and Bryan, Newcome are not fair specimens of the effect of Clapham influence upon the second generation".
G. O. Trevelyan: Op. Cit. p.62.
3. G.W.A. Russell: The Household of Faith, pp.232 and 234.

were in fact the chief lay representatives of the Evangelical religion of their day, and the admitted lay leaders of that small party which, 'amid an almost universal deadness', 'kept alive the flame of spiritual religion' in the Church of England.¹

Being Evangelicals they were without the exclusiveness of the High Church party. They were willing to sit lightly to sectarian differences, and welcomed labour with men who held in the main the same views, and fought for the same objects as themselves. They rejoiced especially that men of different denominations could join together in common Christian causes, and, whenever possible, they made religious enterprises unsectarian;² and even when co-operation was impossible they still maintained their friendly attitude. When they founded the Christian Observer they forthwith announced their determination 'to admit nothing harsh or intemperate toward any sect of Christians'.³ They knew indeed that a great measure of their support lay outside the Established Church; that 'without the aid of non-conformist sympathy, and money, and oratory, and organization, their operations would

1. G.W.A. Russell: The Household of Faith, p.234.

2. The Bible Society is a striking instance. William Jay of Bath said that he once heard Wilberforce say, "Though I am an Episcopalian by birth, I yet feel such a oneness and sympathy with the cause of God at large, that nothing would be more delightful than my communing once a year with every church that holds the Head, even Christ".

Jenkins: William Wilberforce, p.192.

Wilberforce, it may be noted, went through three stages in his attitudes to other faiths. At first he was inclined to be narrow. But as he laboured in his great causes with men of other faiths he grew more tolerant in spirit. But in his later years when his sons began to grow high church, and when they were ministers themselves, he began to grow more cautious in his attitude towards dissenters.

3. Prospectus, printed in Christian Observer, 1802.

have been doomed to certain failure';¹ and they were ever generous in acknowledgment. On the whole, like other Evangelicals, they 'encouraged an ... undenominational temper'.²

Yet they were thoroughly Anglican.³ The Clapham Sect 'was never consciously a sect, and its members would have protested vehemently if they had known that the word was to be applied to them'.⁴ Granville Sharp for instance could easily 'have demonstrated by a series of pamphlets the entire orthodoxy of every member'.⁵ They were convinced of the superiority of the Established church, and believed that Dissent thrived only on Anglican soil.

They were by no means however, as is sometimes represented, the dominant party of the Established church. They were a minority, largely suspected and disliked, and in the higher church circles faced with coldness or 'frank hostility'.⁶ As late as 1810 the C.M.S. contained no names of peers or bishops, and many of the clergy refused to let its missionaries preach in their churches.⁷ Even when the Clapham Sect had won the fight to establish a bishop in India, the bishop appointed was opposed to them and would not ordain

1. G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p.61.
2. R.W. Dale: The New Evangelicalism and The Old, p.17.
3. William Smith was a Unitarian. Venn Family Annals, p.145.
4. Lascelles: Granville Sharp, p.127.
5. Ibid, p.127.
6. Lecky: History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 2, p.627.
Halevy: England in 1815, p. 383.
7. Cornish: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 1, p.8.

their candidates. The Society could not get its men ordained till after the appointment of Bishop Heber who long before was won by Wilberforce's personal charm.¹

When Granville Sharp died the vicar of Fulham would not permit a funeral sermon to be preached for him in Fulham church, because Sharp had helped the British and Foreign Bible Society.² Venn's brother-in-law was offered a mastership of Jesus College - then in the gift of the Bishop of Ely - on the condition that he would resign his connection with the Bible Society.³ In 1815 and 1816 the bishops of Lincoln, Chester, Carlisle, and Ely, all found occasion to oppose the Bible Society in their pastoral charges.⁴ Henry Martyn, for all his distinction, was barred from every church in Cornwall save his brother-in-law's.⁵ Simeon was blackballed from the S.P.C.K., and John Venn was refused admittance to Trinity College, Cambridge, because they were Evangelicals.⁶ And when the carriage of the Bishop of London took Hannah More to visit Venn at Clapham, it had to put her down at a public house

1. Kaye: Christianity in India, p.362.
Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, p.298.
2. Christian Observer, 1813, p.544.
3. Venn Family Annals, p.141.
4. Canton: History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. 1, pp. 308 - 309.
5. Cornish: The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, p.8.
Stock: History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol.1, p.39.
6. Ibid, Vol. 1, p.63.
Venn Family Annals, p.114.

a mile away, because it would not do for a bishop's carriage to be seen at an Evangelical rectory.¹ In fact the Evangelical party, 'whatever else it may have been was the very reverse of dominant'.² They were by no means negligible. Halevy says that 'never in the history of Anglicanism had any party exercised so profound an influence'.³ But they exercised it outside the pale of ecclesiastical favour.

THE CLAPHAM SECT IN PARLIAMENT

In parliament too the Clapham Sect were in a minority. The whole of Wilberforce's following, including a much wider circle than the Clapham Sect, never numbered more than twenty or thirty.⁴ The influence they exercised was again because of the intensity of their passion. They carried into their political life the same standards that governed them elsewhere. Henry Thornton entered his parliamentary career by refusing to pay the bribe of one guinea a vote that was then a matter of course.⁵ And his attitude was the considered attitude of the group. Even Babington, with less prestige than Wilberforce or Thornton, remained in parliament for twenty years without bribery.⁶ And the group were not less incorruptible

1. Venn Family Annals, p.134.

2. W.E.Gladstone: Gleanings of Past Years, Vol.7, p.215.

3. Halevy: England in 1815, pp.383-384.

4. George Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p.231

5. Dictionary of National Biography, Article, Henry Thornton. Clapham and the Clapham Sect, p.108.

6. Colquhoun: Wilberforce and His Friends, p.216.

within parliament. They presented to the House of Commons of their day the novel spectacle of men who put principle before party or profit, 'who looked to the facts of the case and not to the wishes of the minister, and ... required to be obliged with a reason instead of with a job'.¹ Nominally they may have been Tory, as Wilberforce and Stephen, or Whig, as Babington and Smith; actually they were independent. To advance their causes and to uphold their principles they would support any government; or with equal resolution oppose any government - even though their action might deal a painful blow to their party and their friends.² Consequently they gained a unique moral ascendancy over the House of Commons. 'Confidence and respect and ... power, were gradually, and to a great extent involuntarily, accorded to this group of members'.³ Where moral questions were concerned they became a sort of barometer by which doubtful men based their decisions. And they left an impression on the House of Commons which did not end with their passing.

1. G.O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol.1,p.70.

2. See Halevy: England in 1815, p.381, and references in Life of Wilberforce, e.g. Vol.3,p.308 where Wilberforce speaks of 'Babington, and I, and Grant, and Henry Thornton too, all settled down into trying the new ministry, and treating them as their measures shall deserve'. It was said that the only times Pitt could not sleep were at the mutiny of Nore and at the first serious opposition of Wilberforce. Later it was said that Wilberforce's defection on the Melville case brought on Pitt's death. When Wilberforce retired from leadership of the Anti-Slavery party he impressed on his successor 'the importance of keeping this great cause in possession of its old honourable distinction of being one in which all party differences were extinguished.'

Life of Wilberforce, Vol.2,p.71, Vol.3,p.223.

Knutsford: Zachary Macaulay, p.261.

3. G.O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol.1,p.70.

Sir G. O. Trevelyan gave his opinion that among the most permanent of their legacies is 'their undoubted share in the improvement of our political integrity'.¹

The Clapham Sect showed parliament something else almost as surprising as their own incorruptible rectitude. They showed that there was a sturdy, substantial section of the middle classes equally incorruptible - a reliable, decisive body that could be led neither by unlimited liquor nor unstinted gold to betray their allegiance to the men in whose causes they believed. 'The hold of Wilberforce and the anti-slavery movement on the solid middle class in town and country was a thing entirely beautiful - English of the best, and something new in the world'.² Prime ministers and parties came and went, but the Clapham members were returned unfailingly to their seats. Even in the ancien regime, even before the Reform Bill, even in the hey-day of rotten boroughs, their very presence in the House of Commons demonstrated not

1. G.O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol.1,p.71.

"The 'Saints' were ... laughed at and lampooned, but they had begun perhaps the most powerful movement in domestic and foreign policy in the nineteenth century".

Webster: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p.22.

2. G.M.Trevelyan: History of England in the Nineteenth Century, p.54.

Yorkshire, the constituency of Wilberforce, contained 16,000 freeholders, at a time when 400 borough members were returned by 90,000 electors all told. Yet Wilberforce was never defeated in Yorkshire, and could have been returned as member for the rest of his life. In 1807 his opponents spent £200,000 to defeat him, while Wilberforce's campaign expenses - bringing voters to the polls was then a heavy expense - was £28,600. Wilberforce, Grant, Stephen, Thornton, and Babington, all ended their parliamentary careers without a single defeat in an election.

Rudolf: Clapham and the Clapham Sect, p.108.

Life of Wilberforce, Vol.3, p. 335.

G.M.Trevelyan: Op.Cit., p.54. D.N.B. Sub Nom.

only the idealism, but also the independence and the power of the middle classes.

THE UNIQUE SERVICE OF THE CLAPHAM SECT

The Clapham Sect were in a unique position, and were able to perform a unique service to their day. Outside parliament Clapham influence was able to ward off from worthy causes the weapons of contempt and indifference. Little as his Evangelical piety was liked by Ecclesiastics, or by most of the Aristocracy, Wilberforce was one of the most popular men in England. He was the favourite of the most fashionable of hostesses, and the celebrity sought out by the most distinguished visitors from foreign countries. No society was so distinguished that his presence did not bring to it an added brilliance. And his henchmen, if they had less sparkling gifts, were yet men of power and reputation. A Society founded, a cause advocated, by a few penniless clergymen, and a few unknown enthusiasts, might make but halting progress; but the countenance of Wilberforce, of a Director of the East India Company, a Governor of the Bank of England, and of an ex-Governor-General of India - to mention no others - brought new possibilities. By its favour the Clapham Sect could lift struggling causes to influence and income.

Within parliament the Clapham Sect provided a link between the Dissenters and the government. The middle classes, the stronghold of the Sect, were also the

stronghold of Dissent. The Clapham Sect could not have won their battles without the Dissenters; but the Dissenters could have achieved little without the Clapham Sect. Their fervour would have dissipated in fruitless strivings of little groups without capable leadership or adequate representation. The Clapham Sect provided leadership to which Dissenters gave willing allegiance, and were thus able to gather the scattered enthusiasms that might have trickled away in unharnessed streams, and to direct them into one mighty current, of which the combined power could be applied to the practical machinery of reform.¹ By this advantage the Clapham Sect were able to achieve what otherwise would have been impossible. For against them were arrayed the most powerful vested interests, the strongest forces of the time.² And these interests were supported by professional and upper class opinion. "The bar were all against us",³

1. "In fact Evangelicalism here (in the Abolition campaign) played a role similar to that which it played in all humanitarian movements of modern England. It constituted a link, effected a transition between Anglicanism and Dissent, between the governing classes and the general public as represented by the great middle class. It prevented the formation of a reactionary group, and won the support of the gentry and the nobility, sometimes even of a member of the Royal family, for a movement initiated by shopkeepers and preachers. And the action of the party was decisive in securing from Parliament the legislation which embodied the dictates of the national council".

Halevy: England in 1815, p. 400.

2. "Wilberforce's militant piety, like that of all the Clapham Sect, impinged upon several commercial interests within the empire; it importuned and shadowed contemporary statesmen; it obtruded itself into international relations".

C.E.Fryer, The American Historical Review, Vol. xxix, Oct. 1923 -

3. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. i, p. 293.

said Wilberforce in the early years of his campaign. And in 1832 he complained that the clergymen also had given but hesitating support.¹ The clergy, indeed, were too conscious of certain features in their own situation. One Abolitionist said that, with a single exception, the whole Episcopal bench, though their hearts were favourable, were afraid to support a principle that encroached on the rights of property, fearing that 'if the slaves went, tithes would soon follow them'.² Corruption and privilege were then so deeply rooted in church and state that perhaps Lord St Vincent was expressing the secret feeling of most propertied people when, in 1833, he warned the House of Lords against setting up what was right against what was established. "The whole fabric of society", he declared, "would go to pieces if the wedge of abstract right were once entered into any part of it".³ In such an atmosphere the Clapham Sect might have been but voices crying in the wilderness; but, because they brought to their support the religious fervour of the middle classes, they were able to uproot the most deeply entrenched institutions of their time.

THE IMPORTANCE AND THE TIMELINESS OF THEIR WORK

The importance of their campaigns and their victories

1. G.M.Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century, p.53.
2. Stephen: Anti-Slavery Recollections, p. 179.
3. Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, xviii, p. 261.

can scarcely be estimated now. "Part of their work was so thoroughly done", says G.O.Trevelyan, "that the world, as its wont is, has long ago taken the credit of that work to itself".¹ But, although most of their names are already fading from memory, the influence of their labours is written largely in subsequent history. Because of the Clapham Sect England's policies, and England's actions, were different, and more creditable. Indeed, Clapham influence extended beyond England. 'Politics in that microcosm were rather cosmopolitan than national'.² Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, Sweeden, Russia, and, at the inter-national conferences, still other countries, were led by pressure from Clapham to actions they would not otherwise have taken. No peace negotiation, no Council of the period, escaped the influence of the Clapham Sect. Amiens, Paris, Vienna, Verona, and Aix-la-Chappelle were all bombarded by Clapham letters and Clapham pamphlets; and sometimes persuaded by speeches and documents carefully planned by Clapham 'Cabinet Councils', and painstakingly drafted by Clapham labourers.³ Castlereagh and Wellington were scarcely more ambassadors for England than for Clapham. It is unquestionable that Clapham passion and persistence and industry achieved what otherwise would have been unachieved. 'For we know by our experience in other matters,

1. G.O.Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol.1, p. 71.

2. Stephen: Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, p. 553.

3. See past chapters, and Life of Wilberforce, Passim.

that evil does not die of its own accord; but that things are what they are, and the consequences will be what they will be'.¹

The significance of the Clapham Sect is further revealed by a recognition of their singular timeliness. The slave trade was stopped before the economic expansion of European nations had well begun, and before slavery on a large scale was introduced into the home of the slaves.

"It is terrible to reflect", says Dean Inge, "what might have happened if slavery had not been abolished before the partition of Africa among the Great Powers. The whole of the Dark Continent might have become a gigantic slave farm, with consequences to the social and economic condition of Europe itself which cannot be calculated".²

Professor G.M. Trevelyan expresses the same judgement, and says that such a consequence might have 'destroyed and corrupted Europe itself'; and in a memorable picture he adds,

"On the last night of slavery the negroes in our West Indian Islands went up on to the hill-tops to watch the sun rise, bringing them freedom as its first rays struck the waters. But far away in the forests of Central Africa, in the heart of darkness yet unexplored, none understood or regarded the day. Yet it was the dark continent which was most deeply affected of all. Before its exploitation by Europe had well begun, the most powerful of the nations that were to control its destiny had decided that slavery should not be the relation of the black man to the white."³

What alterations in the course of world history have been made by the abolition of slavery before the plantation system had taken hold of Africa no one now can more than faintly predict; but that the abolition did come in time

1. G.M.Trevelyan, in the London Times, July 29, 1933.
2. W.R.Inge: England, p.111; and see Coupland: Wilberforce, pp. 509-511.
3. G.M.Trevelyan: Op.Cit. And British History in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 254-255.

is due more to the Clapham Sect than to any other single group.

In India too the influence of the Clapham Sect was not less timely. Had the old principle of isolation and exploitation continued, the relations between England and India would have been disastrous. They 'would have hardened into soulless exploitation on the one side and on the other into servile fear and hate'.¹ That these relations did not develop is due partly of course to Edmund Burke's 'imaginative grasp of the moral obligations of Empire',² and to Pitt's statesmanship. But Burke and Pitt would have asked little more than the Act of 1793. The Clapham Sect went further.

"They ... planted in the public conscience of their countrymen not merely a sensitiveness to wrong, but a positive sense of obligation to the backward peoples of the world. And in so far as the conduct of the British Governments towards the native races in their charge was to be inspired throughout the coming century by the ideals of trusteeship, the honour of creating that tradition lay with them".³

But they did more than create the tradition; they made possible the means for preserving it. For they opened India to missionaries, and the missionaries were to prove the best informed, and the most insistent opponents of political and commercial oppression.

"It was the influence of the missionaries which was to establish the principle that, in the backward regions of the world, it was the duty of the British power to

1. Coupland: Wilberforce, p.58.

2. G.M.Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p.48.

3. Coupland: Wilberforce, p.382.

prevent the ruthless exploitation of primitive peoples, and to lead them gently into civilized ways of life."¹

Add to these achievements of the Clapham Sect what they did for England through their support of popular education, and for peoples of all the earth, through the spread of religious literature - including hundreds of thousands of Bibles and Testaments - by Societies which their influence helped to prestige and prosperity; and it can be appreciated that their tiny group left a real impression on world history.²

THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF THE CLAPHAM SECT

The Clapham Sect made another, and less suspected contribution to the England of later days. They have been reproached with their social attitudes; and, if by some writers rather unfairly, not without certain real justification. But, on a longer view, the reproach loses its effect. Temporarily they did support repressive policies, and injure the cause of the labourer. But perhaps no people in England were doing more than they to make it impossible for such policies to survive. They gave all their gifts and their energies to the cultivation of humanitarian sentiment. At a time when the doctrine was not trite and commonplace, but novel

1. Ramsay Muir: History of the British Commonwealth, Vol. 2, p. 223.
 2. After the publication of Stephen's article on The Clapham Sect, T. B. Macaulay wrote to one of his sisters, "The truth is that from that little knot of men emanated all the Bible Societies and almost all the Missionary Societies in the world. The whole organisation of the Evangelical party was their work. The share which they had in providing means for the education of the people was great. They were really the destroyers of the slave-trade and of slavery."
- G. O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, p. 68

and dangerous, they valiantly preached the brotherhood of man, the fundamental rights of man, and the shame of permitting for the benefit of commerce what was inherently degrading to humanity itself. They did not, it is true, grasp the wider implications of such a doctrine. They were occupied with the immediate and terrible inferences for slavery. But it was of real importance to have proclaimed the doctrine; other reformers were soon pressing applications of a widely different nature.¹

From the very beginning, indeed, many people apprehended the potential significance of anti-slavery principles and strenuously pointed out their ultimate consequences. Past chapters have indicated how persistently the Clapham Sect were accused of sowing the seeds of social disorder. In 1824 a certain Mr. Richardson, a strong admirer of Wilberforce, felt constrained to publish a serious warning. He pointed out how Wilberforce and his friends had been urging such questions as, "Are we not all of one father?" But, he objected,

"Little do these zealous ... advocates for Negro Emancipation dream that they are industriously sowing the seeds of anarchy and wild impatience of all government, and breaking down the pale of ORDER. These inflammatory appeals of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends, are equally CRUEL, unchristian and unpolitic; cruel to the

1. e.g., When Hume was arguing in Parliament for the abolition of the impressment of seamen he referred to the anti-slavery principle of "the great advantage which voluntary service of every kind had over coerced service."
Parliamentary History, New Series, Vol. xi, 1172.

lower orders of society in engendering and cherishing a spirit of dissatisfaction with their sphere and lot in life, which cannot and ought not to be elevated; unchristian in striking at the root of every gospel precept of subordination which commands all men to be satisfied with the station and sphere in which they were born".¹

The truth is that, from their standpoint, the conservatives had good reason to be apprehensive. The doctrine of universal brotherhood has implications to which men will not forever be blind; and though the Clapham Sect were not awake to all of these implications they nevertheless preached the doctrine, and so helped to create the atmosphere in which other reforms were achieved.²

Their main service, however, was even more direct. They taught a methodology of agitation. Their political conduct is one of the most significant features in their history. Even in the years of Pitt's repression, even in the years following Waterloo and leading up to Peterloo, even at a time when all agitation was suspect, and agitation to force the hand of the government was counted treason - all the while the Clapham Sect, by virtue of their causes, were conducting the most persistent, systematic, and wide-spread agitation that England had ever seen, and developing a strategy of organization and propaganda which was a new and effective feature in English

1. J.M.Richardson: Anti-Slavery Emancipation, pp.12-13.
 2. "The historian of the movement which produced the factory acts must not forget the many tributaries which swelled the main stream. But the source of the river was the piety and Christian sentiment of the Evangelicals."
- Rattenbury: Wesley's Legacy to the World, p.247.
(quoting Halevy).

politics. They exploited all the known methods of moving the masses, all the expedients of the politician, all the tricks of the party campaign. And, out of their varied experience and their different needs, they added new methods cleverly adapted to English conditions. In 1807 General Gascoygne said bitterly that the abolitionists had resorted to 'every measure that invention or artifice could devise to create a popular clamor'.¹ And Klingberg says that the later emancipation campaign was 'the first instance of an appeal to public opinion by means of all the modern agencies of publicity; lecture, pamphlet, newspaper, and billboard. It was the first example of the open participation of women in a contest'.² All these developments were originated, if not directly by the Clapham Sect, at least by men whom the Clapham Sect directly inspired. The Clapham Sect also developed the use of the anniversary, with its mass meetings, its well planned oratory, and, later, its collections, and its provision for the attendance of women. They developed too, and demonstrated by numerous examples, a strategy for preparing petitions, and bringing them at critical moments to bear on Parliament. They gave expert teaching, in fact, in two things: first, how to create public opinion; and then, how to

1. Parliamentary Debates, viii, 718.

2. Klingberg: The Anti-Slavery Movement in England, Preface.

bring the pressure of that opinion against the government. And thus, by the trend of their policy and the contagious example of their method, they quite outbalanced the conservatism of some of their individual actions. G.O. Trevelyan well said of them,

"By the zeal, the munificence, the laborious activity with which they pursued their religious and semi-religious enterprises they did more to teach the world how to get rid of existing institutions than by their votes and speeches at Westminster they contributed to preserve them. With their May meetings, and African Institutions, and Anti-slavery Reporters, and their subscriptions of tens of thousands of pounds, and their petitions bristling with hundreds of thousands of signatures, and all the machinery for informing opinion and bringing it to bear on ministers and legislators which they did so much to perfect and even to invent, they can be regarded as nothing short of the pioneers and fuglemen of that system of popular agitation which forms a leading feature in our internal history during the past half-century. At an epoch when the Cabinet which they supported was so averse to manifestations of political sentiment that a Reformer who spoke his mind in England was seldom long out of prison, and in Scotland ran a very serious risk of transportation, Toryism sat oddly enough on men who spent their days in the committee-room and their evenings on the platform, and each of whom belonged to more Associations combined for the purpose of influencing Parliament than he could count on the fingers of both his hands."¹

And G.M. Trevelyan says of the 'systematic propaganda' against slavery,

"Its methods became the model for the conduct of hundreds and even thousands of other movements - political, humanitarian, social, educational - which have been and still are the chief arteries of the life-blood of modern Britain, where every man or woman with a little money, or a little public spirit, is constantly joining Leagues, Unions or Committees formed to agitate some question, finance some object, local or national. In the eighteenth century this was not so. The habits engendered by the anti-slavery movement were a main cause of the change."²

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1. G.O. Trevelyan: Life of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1, pp. 67-69.
 2. G.M. Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 51-52.

In short, while occupied mainly with objects of a missionary character, and inspired almost wholly by motives of a pietistic origin, the Clapham Sect, by the principles they evoked and the methods they developed, indirectly rendered to English social movements an outstanding service - a service which they themselves did not foresee, which is still least suspected by those whom it has most benefited; but which nevertheless justifies the conclusion that they were indeed among the 'pioneers and fuglemen' of English social progress.¹

THEIR SUCCESSORS

If the Clapham Sect prepared the way for much of the agitation and many of the humanitarian victories of the following years, they left singularly little through lineal descent. The second generation of the 'Confederation of the Common' were men of great pith and moment; and some of them, such as Sir James Stephen and Robert Grant, were scarcely less devoted labourers for their fathers' causes than the fathers themselves had been.

1. e.g. Cobden urged in 1838 that the campaign against Corn Laws would be irresistible "if agitated in the same manner that the question of slavery had been". Morley: Life of Cobden, p. 126. Halevy says, "In fact, the revolutionaries at the very time when they charged the Tory evangelicalism of Wilberforce with assisting the oppression of the people by drugging its just anger to sleep, borrowed from the popular evangelicalism of the sects its methods or organization, its trifling subscription lists, open air meetings, and paid service of itinerant preachers, sent from town to town to spread the new doctrine." Halevy: The English People in 1815-1830, p.13.

But certainly the 'Sect' passed completely with the death of the original company. In 1845 the younger Stephen wrote sadly, "No 'Clapham Sect' nowadays".¹ There was indeed no 'Clapham Sect'; and England was the poorer.

In the generation succeeding the Clapham Sect, religious fervour flowed into three main channels. The wide section of Wilberforce's following demonstrated the soundness of the earlier humanitarian movement by marching under a new leader in a new campaign. Slavery having been abolished the time had come to take the next field. Hence in the year of Wilberforce's death, Lord Shaftesbury, 'the Wilberforce of the whites',² commenced his campaign for the unfortunate 'factory-slaves', a campaign which was to issue in a virtual transformation of factory life. Under Wilberforce and Shaftesbury the Evangelicals left to England a legacy of extraordinary social achievements. Shaftesbury, however, shared one defect of his earlier brethren. He had even less love than Wilberforce had for the idea of democracy. He gained for the labourer in England more than any other single man of his century; but he voted against the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867, and was hostile to Trade

1. Letters of the first Sir James Stephen, p. 87.
2. G.M.Trevelyan: British History in the Nineteenth Century, p.55. An excellent survey of Shaftesbury's life can be found in Bready's Shaftesbury. Bready understands and interprets Lord Shaftesbury much better than the Hammonds do.

Unions and to genuine movements of the working class such as Chartism. He won democratic victories in an aristocratic temper.

The democratic temper found an outlet in another movement with wider sympathies - the Christian Socialism of Maurice and Kingsley. This movement, in a manner, supplemented the deficiencies of Shaftesbury's; and the two rendered real service to English social progress.¹ Unfortunately religion took yet another attitude to social reform.

The Tractarians swung into alarmed reaction against all 'Liberalism', and simply repudiated the social obligations of the church. Pusey lamented that the Emancipation of the slaves had meant the expenditure of £20,000,000 'for an opinion'. Hurrell Froude could feel no love for the 'niggers' because they 'concentrated in themselves all the whiggery, dissent, cant, and abomination that had been ranged on their side'.² Newman, who said in later life that he 'had never considered social questions in their relation to faith',³ paid attention to men who freed the slaves, and fought for the birthright of the children in the mills, chiefly to pour scorn on them for forgetting 'the prophetic office of the church'.⁴ The Tractarians, in fact, repudiated rather than challenged the new

1. A good account of the Christian Socialist movement is given in Raven's Christian Socialism, of the Chartist movement in Hovell's The Chartist Movement.
2. H.L. Stewart: A Century of Anglo-Catholicism, pp.9-10.
3. Raven: Christian Socialism, p.21.
4. H.L. Stuart: Op. Cit.

materialism, and diverted the attention of the church from social iniquities to lost mysteries of the past.

"When the cry of the oppressed was ringing in man's ears and when Christianity might have listened to the prophets of social righteousness or to the victims of social evil, fifty years were wasted in lawsuits over 'regeneration' and ritual, vestments and incense, and the precise meaning of sixteenth century rubrics".¹

It is not to impugn the genuine contributions which the Tractarians made to English religion to say that for them to have obtained their later influence in this earlier period would have been a dark and incalculable tragedy in English history. Had the Tractarian spirit - as at first manifested - been dominant in the days of Wilberforce it would inevitably have blocked the abolition of the slave trade, and the emancipation of the slaves, and have frowned upon the attempt to institute the Church Missionary Society and to evangelise India. And it would have rendered impossible joint Christian enterprises such as The Religious Tract Society and The British and Foreign Bible Society. Had Wilberforce, for instance, swung to High Church sentiment instead of to Evangelical there would have resulted a different and less happy nineteenth century with different and less worthy ideals. When so much was done that reaction could not undo, when so many victories were achieved, and the way so opened for many more, then the time was ripe for the Tractarians

1. Raven: Christian Socialism, p.20.

to render their own services to England. But it would have been disastrous had they come at the time of, and in the place of, the Clapham Sect.

The Clapham Sect, in short, seem to have been raised providentially for their particular duties in their particular time. Their combined gifts and advantages, and their fervour and perseverance, enabled them to render services, religious, social, and political, that were at once cardinally important and critically opportune. Had their influence been lacking there seems no ground for believing that any other influence of the time could have accomplished their work. Without them there would have been at least a crippled and delayed growth of the principles and traditions that most worthily distinguish their nation's history.

But the Clapham Sect did more than just to perform their own labours, more even than to bequeath a method to others; they also caught the imagination and kindled the inspiration of others. In 1807, after the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Sir James MacIntosh, in a grateful tribute to Wilberforce, said,

"Who knows whether the greater part of the benefit that he has conferred on the world ... may not be the encouraging example that ... exertions ... may be crowned by such splendid success? ... Hundreds and thousands will be animated by Mr. Wilberforce's example ... to attack all forms of corruption and cruelty that scourge mankind".¹

The Clapham Sect, in fact, did a great deal to change

1. Life of Wilberforce, Vol. 3, pp. 302-303.

the atmosphere of the nation. Professor G. M. Trevelyan attributes in part to the anti-slavery triumph the origin of the Victorian optimism. 'Mankind had been successfully lifted on to a higher plane by the energy of good men and the world breathed a more kindly air'.¹ Good had won so dazzling a victory over so grim a foe that multitudes of men were moved to a new faith in humanity, and a new confidence that almost any further victory might be possible. And that faith and confidence heartened the crusaders of the following generation. There was a fitting symbolism in the gleam of sunshine that lit up the last public words of Wilberforce. He and his faithful band had fought a weary battle under lowering skies. But at even time there was light. They left England with an 'earnest of success', and an awakened hope that days still brighter were to come.

1. London Times, July 29, 1933.

APPENDIX ONE

The name 'The Clapham Sect' was made popular by Sir James Stephen¹ in his famous essay under that title. The essay was published in the Edinburgh Review, 1844, and was republished in Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography. Its opening paragraph suggests that its title was taken from an earlier article in the Edinburgh Review, an article which had been subsequently published in a separate collection. The paragraph is as follows:

"In one of those collections of essays which have been recently detached from the main body of this Journal there occur certain pleasant allusions, already rendered obscure by the lapse of time, to a religious sect or society, which, as it appears, was flourishing in this realm in the reign of George III. What subtle theories, what clouds of learned dust, might have been raised by future Binghams, and by Du Pins yet unborn, to determine what was The Patent Christianity, and what The Clapham Sect of the nineteenth century, had not a fair and a noble author appeared to dispel, or at least to mitigate the darkness".²

Further to make explicit his reference Stephen adds that his essay will endeavour to supplement individual biographies that have appeared, and thus make intelligible to future generations the allusions of his 'facetious colleague', - who, he indicates in a footnote, is the Rev. Sydney Smith.

From these grounds later writers have, without question, accepted The Clapham Sect as a phrase which Sydney Smith created. Many writers state without qualification that Smith coined the name, and some add specifically that he did so in the Edinburgh Review. But the present writer has discovered with surprise that within the entire scope of the bibliography of this thesis there is no reference to a page in Sydney Smith's works in which the phrase may be found. And he himself has been unable to find it.

1. Son of James Stephen of the Clapham Sect.
2. The Edinburgh Review, July - October, 1844. (Vol. lxxx) p.251.

There are some minor changes in the republished essay, e.g. 'our facetious colleague' is rendered 'the facetious Journalist'.

The authors to whom Stephen refers are Mary Milner and Lord Teignmouth, whose books, the Life of Dean Milner and the Life of Lord Teignmouth, Stephen's article is supposed to review.

Many similar phrases can be discovered. In the collection of Smith's Works published in 1839 - the collection to which Stephen's essay evidently refers - there are numerous oblique thrusts at Clapham. Smith refers, for instance, to the Christian Observer as 'the organ of a great political religious party' (Works, p.138); to Mrs. Hannah More as belonging to 'a trumpety faction' (Works, p.168); to Wilberforce as 'the head of the Clapham Church' (Works, p.567); and makes other similar allusions. (See pp.113, 116 footnote, 137, 167, 433, 562, 623.)¹ But he makes still more pointed references - and one which Stephen seems to be quoting - not in the Edinburgh Review articles but in Peter Plymley's Letters. In these he makes such references as the following:

"Is not Mr. Wilberforce at the head of the church of Clapham?"

(Smith: Works, p.576)

"William Wilberforce, Esq., and the patent Christians of Clapham".

(Ibid, p.584)

"That patent Christianity which has been for some time manufacturing at Clapham".

(Ibid, p.596)

(The phrase patent Christianity is the one which in the opening paragraph of his essay Stephen uses in conjunction with The Clapham Sect)

"A Methodistical chancellor of the true Clapham breed".

(Ibid, p.624)

But, after the most careful search, the writer has been unable to discover any place where Smith used that one phrase The Clapham Sect. Indeed he feels confident that the phrase is not in any of Smith's published works.²

Two possibilities are open. Sydney Smith may have used the phrase only in speech, or in some article undiscovered, or not extant; or Stephen may have invented the phrase himself. The first possibility seems to be precluded by the explicit reference to articles republished from the Edinburgh Review, - from which, relying upon memory, Stephen may have

1. The references for this appendix are given to the one volume edition of Smith's Works, published first in 1839, and republished in 1869. Peter Plymley's Letters are included.
2. The writer is confirmed in this opinion by finding, on enquiry, that the reference is not known to Professors G.M. Trevelyan and Reginald Coupland, nor to the President of the Clapham Antiquarian Society, the Rev. T. C. Dale.

failed to dissociate similar phrases in Peter Plymley's Letters. The second possibility may be considered.

A possible, though not the accepted nor the most obvious, reading of Stephen's opening paragraph is that, from Smith's various references to Clapham, 'future Bingham and Du Pins yet unborn' might be moved to spin subtle theories about a Clapham Sect. It may be, therefore, that the phrase had its birth in Stephen's article.

That possibility seems to be supported by a later phrase in the essay which speaks of 'that sect to which, having first given a name, we would now build up a monument'.¹ There is, indeed, a still later phrase which speaks of 'that confederacy, which, when pent up within the narrow limit of Clapham, jocose men invidiously called a sect'.² But this last phrase does not create insuperable difficulty. For, though the specific phrase The Clapham Sect, may not have been used, men, both jocose and serious, had referred to the Clapham group as a 'Sect'. Brougham, for instance, in his Historical Sketches, speaks of Wilberforce as 'the head, indeed the founder, of a powerful religious sect'.³

All that can now be said is that neither of the two italicised phrases of Stephen, patent Christianity and The Clapham Sect, can be found in the articles to which Stephen refers - Sydney Smith's contributions to the Edinburgh Review; but that the former phrase can be found in Peter Plymley's Letters. It is, however, not impossible that the famous nickname has been correctly attributed to Smith; but perhaps more probable that it was invented by Sir James Stephen.

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1. The Edinburgh Review, July-October, 1844. (Vol. lxxx), p. 269
 2. The Edinburgh Review, July-October, 1844. (Vol. lxxx), p. 307
 3. Brougham: Historical Sketches, p. 346.

APPENDIX TWO

This pleasant picture of an evening in Thornton's villa at Clapham was drawn by one who knew the circle intimately, Mr. John Colquhoun, in his William Wilberforce, His Friends, and His Times. (pp.305-308)

"The sheltered garden behind, with its arbeil trees and elms and Scotch firs, as it lay so still, with its close shaven lawn, looked gay on a May afternoon, when groups of young and old seated themselves under the shade of the trees, or were scattered over the grounds. Matrons of households were there, who had strolled in to enjoy a social meeting; and their children busied themselves in sports with a youthful glee, which was cheered, not checked, by the presence of the elders. For neighbourly hospitality and easy friendship were features of that family life. Presently, streaming from adjoining villas or crossing the common, appeared others who, like Henry Thornton had spent an occupied day in town, and now resorted to this well-known garden to gather up their families and enjoy a pleasant hour. Hannah More is there, with her sparkling talk ... and the long-faced, blue-eyed Scotsman, with his fixed, calm look, unchanged as an aloe tree, known as the Indian Director, one of the kings of Leadenhall Street; and the gentle Thane, Lord Teignmouth, whose easy talk flowed on, like a southern brook, with a sort of drowsy murmur; and Macaulay stands by listening, silent, with hanging eyebrows; and Babington, in blue coat, dropping weighty words with husky voice; and young listeners the young Grants, and young Stephen But whilst these things are talked of in the shade, and the knot of wise men draw close together, in darts the member for Yorkshire² from the green fields to the south, like a sunbeam into a shady room, and the faces of the old brighten, and the children clap their hands with joy. He joins the group of elders, catches up a thread of their talk, dashes off a bright remark, pours a ray of happy illumination, and for a few moments seems as wise, as thoughtful, and as constant as themselves. But this dream will not last and these watchful young eyes know it. They remember that he is as restless as they are, as fond of fun and movement. So, on the first youthful challenge, away flies the volatile statesman. A bunch of flowers, a ball, is thrown in sport, and away dash, in joyous rivalry, the children and the philanthropist. Law and statesmanship forgotten, he is the gayest child of them all.

"But presently, when the group has broken up, and the friends have gone to their houses, the circle under Henry Thornton's roof gathers for its evening talk. In the Oval Library, which Pitt planned, niched and fringed all round with books, looking out on the pleasant lawn, they meet for their more sustained conversation. In this easy intercourse even

the shy Gisborne opens himself. At times the talk is interspersed with reading, the books chosen by the host
or he and Gisborne read by turns one of Wilberforce's brilliant orations. Or they vary their summer evenings by strolling through the fresh green fields into the wilder shrubbery which encloses Mr Wilberforce's desmesne: Broomfield, not like Battersea Rise, with trim parterres and close mown lawn, but unkempt - a picture of stray genius and irregular thoughts. As they pass near the windows that look out on the north, and admire the old elms that shade the slopes to the stream, the kindly host hears their voices, and runs out with his welcome. So they are led into that charmed circle, and find there the portly dean³ with his stentorian voice, and the eager Stephen Another evening the party cross the common, and drop into the villa of the Teignmouths, or spend a pleasant hour in Robert Thornton's decorated grounds On Sunday they take their place in the old church, with the Wilberforces' and Macaulays' and Stephens' pews close to their own, and in the front gallery the Teignmouths; and they listen to the wise discourses of Venn; another Sunday they sit enchanted under the preaching of Gisborne."

1. Grant
2. Wilberforce
3. Milner

APPENDIX THREE

The following questionnaire was sent out by Wilberforce in 1796 to a large circle of private friends. It was devised as a means of obtaining accurate information on which to proceed with plans for the relief of the poor; and it reveals very well the scope and character of Wilberforce's philanthropy.

STATE OF THE POOR

1. What mode of supplying the necessities of the poor during the present scarcity has been pursued in your part of the country?
2. What is now the actual rate of common labourers' wages?
3. What is the ordinary proportion of common manufacturers' wages to those of common labourers? and how far has the former affected the latter?
4. Has there been any and what rise in the wages of labour* both summer and winter for the twenty or thirty years preceding 1794-5? and if any, at what periods and in what degrees has it taken place?
5. Have you known in fact unequal prices of labour in places near to each other, which may be supposed to have resulted from the operation of the poor laws?
6. What rise in the price of the necessaries and principal conveniences of life has taken place during the same period, distinguishing each article as particularly as may be?
7. Is task-work common in your part of the country, and how much can a man earn per day or week in this way?
8. What appears to you to have been the effect in point of population of increasing the size of farms and enclosing commons, and has the quantity of land in tillage been thereby so much diminished as that notwithstanding the improvement of what has continued in tillage the quantity of grain produced has been less than before?
9. Has the practice of engrossing small farms prevailed within your knowledge, and if so, with what effects has it been attended?

* By "labour" and "labourers" is meant agricultural labour, or any other species of work wherein no skill.

10. What were the habits of living amongst the labouring classes twenty or thirty years ago, and what are they now? Do they now live harder than they did then, or than they did at some intervening period?
11. Did the poor twenty or thirty years ago use meat and beer more or much more than they did till the commencement of the present scarcity?
12. Do potatoes constitute about you a material part of the food of the labouring class?
13. Do the poor in general appear tolerably contented with their situation, or otherwise?
14. What proportion and descriptions of the labouring class, when not disabled by age, sickness, &. receive parish relief, how often and how long?
15. Have the poor rates been progressively increasing for some years past, and if so, in what sums, and in what proportions?
16. Does any, and what proportion of the labouring poor about you belong to Friendly Societies, Box Clubs, and what appear to you to have been the effects of these institutions?
17. Were the common labourers' wages sufficient to maintain a man and his wife, and four or five children, before the commencement of the present scarcity?
18. Have the ale-houses increased in your part of the country within the last thirty years, and in what degree, and what has been the effect of such increase?
19. Do the morals of the lower orders appear to you to have improved, or to have grown worse, within the last twenty or thirty years? Are they more or less frequent in their attendance on public worship?
20. What proportion of the children of the poor may be supposed to have no schooling, and have they more or less of it than formerly?
21. Would it be politic to hold out additional encouragements to the growth of wheat? And if so, what encouragements?
22. Would it not be politic to encourage the use of oxen in agriculture, draught, &. in place of that of horses?
23. Have cottages in general less land about them than formerly? And if so, what have been the effects on the comfort and morals of their inhabitants?

APPENDIX FOUR

Nearly a century elapsed before any memorial of the Clapham Sect was founded in Clapham; but in 1919 a tablet was built into the south wall of Clapham Parish Church bearing the following inscription:

LET US PRAISE GOD

For the memory and example of all the faithful departed who have worshipped in this Church, and especially for the under named Servants of Christ sometime called

"THE CLAPHAM SECT"

who in the latter part of the XVIIIth and early part of the XIXth Centuries laboured so abundantly for the increase of National Righteousness and the Conversion of the Heathen, and rested not until the curse of slavery was swept away from all parts of the British Dominions ---

Charles Grant	Henry Thornton
Zachary Macaulay	John Thornton
Granville Sharp	Henry Venn
John Shore	(Curate of Clapham)
(Lord Teignmouth	John Venn
James Stephen	(Rector of Clapham)
	William Wilberforce.

"O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that Thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them."

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Lascelles, E.C.P.	<u>Granville Sharp and the Freedom of Slaves in England (Granville Sharp)</u>	London	1928
Maitland, F.W.	<u>Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen</u>	London	1906
Marshman, John Clark	<u>The Story of Carey Marshman and Ward. The Serampore Missionaries</u>	London	1864
Maurice, Frederick	<u>The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice</u>	London	1884
Milner, Mary	<u>The Life of Isaac Milner</u>	London	1842 1844
Morison, J. Cotter	<u>Macaulay</u>	London	1882
Morley, John	<u>The Life of Richard Cobden</u>	London	1881
Morley, John	<u>The Life of William Ewart Gladstone</u>	London	1903
Morris, Henry	<u>The Governor-Generals of India</u>	London	1907
Morris, Henry	<u>The Life of Charles Grant (Life of Grant)</u>	London	1904
Morris, Henry	<u>Reginald Heber</u>	Madras	1901
Moule, H.C.G.	<u>Charles Simeon</u>	London	1892

Mudge, Z.A.	<u>The Christian Statesman - Portraiture of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton</u>	New York	1865
Newton, John	<u>The Life of John Newton with Selections from His Correspondence</u>	London	1855
Pearson, Rev. Hugh	<u>Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D.D. (Memoirs of Buchanan)</u>	Oxford	1817
Pratt, Josiah and John Henry	<u>Memoir of the Rev. Josiah Pratt, B.D. (Memoirs of Pratt)</u>	London	1849
Pratt, J.	<u>Sketch of the Life of the Late Right Honourable Lord Teignmouth. (Printed from Christian Observer May, 1834)</u>	London	1834
Pugh, Rev.S.S.	<u>Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart.</u>	London	1899
Reid, Stuart J.	<u>The Life and Times of Sydney Smith</u>	London	1896
Roberts, W.	<u>Life of Hannah More</u>	London	1838
Romilly, Sir Samuel (Ed.by Sons)	<u>Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly with Selections from His Correspondence</u>	London	1840
Rose, J.Holland	<u>A Short Life of William Pitt</u>	London	1925
Rose, J.Holland	<u>Pitt and Napoleon</u>	London	1912
Rose, J.Holland	<u>William Pitt and National Revival</u>	London	1911
Lord Rosebery	<u>Pitt</u>	London	1891
Russell, Geo.W.E.	<u>The Household of Faith</u>	London	1906
Russell, Geo.W.E.	<u>Sydney Smith</u>	London	1905
Sadler, Michael	<u>Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler</u>	London	1842
Smith, George	<u>The Life of William Carey</u>	London	1885
Smith, George	<u>Twelve Indian Statesmen</u>	London	1897

Southey, Robert	<u>The Life of John Wesley</u>	London	Standard Biographies Edition
Stephen, Caroline E.	<u>The Right Honourable Sir James Stephen Letters with Biographical Notes</u>	Private Publica- tion	1906
Stephen, Leslie	<u>The Life of Sir James Fitz- James Stephen</u>	London	1895
Stoughton, John	<u>Howard the Philanthropist, and His Friends</u>	London	1884
Stoughton, John	<u>William Wilberforce</u>	London	1880
Lord Teignmouth Charles John Shore	<u>Memoir of the Life and Correspondence of John Lord Teignmouth (Life of Teignmouth)</u>	London	1843
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Thompson, Henry	<u>The Life of Hannah More</u>	London	1838
Thornton, Percy M.	<u>Some Things We Have Remembered</u>	London	1912
Trevelyan, George M.	<u>Lord Grey of the Reform Bill Being the Life of Charles, Second Lord Grey</u>	London	1929
Trevelyan, George O.	<u>The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (Life of Lord Macaulay)</u>	London	1876
Urlin, R. Denny	<u>The Churchman's Life of Wesley</u>	London	1880
Venn, John	<u>Annals of a Clerical Family (Venn Family Annals)</u>	London	1904
Venn, John	<u>The Life and a Selection from the Letters of the Late Rev. Henry Venn</u>	London	1834
Wallas, Graham	<u>The Life of Francis Place</u>	London	1898
Walpole, Horace (Ed. by Mrs. Paget Toynbee)	<u>The Letters of Horace Walpole</u>	Oxford	1905
Wesley, John	<u>Journal</u>	London	1827

Wheeler, H.M.	<u>The Slaves Champion-or the Life, Deeds and Historical Days of William Wilberforce</u>	London	1859
Wilberforce, Robt. Isaac and Samuel	<u>The Life of William Wilberforce</u> (Life of Wilberforce)	London	1838
Wilberforce, William (Ed. by A.M. Wilberforce)	<u>Private Papers</u>	London	1897
Wilberforce, William (Ed. by R.I. and Samuel Wilberforce)	<u>The Correspondence of William Wilberforce</u>	London	1840
Wilberforce, William	<u>Pitt and Wilberforce: Containing a Sketch of Mr. Pitt</u>	London	1897
Wilks, Rev. Samuel C.	<u>Life of Lord Teignmouth with Selections</u>	London	1835
Woolman, John	<u>Journal of the Life and Travels of John Woolman</u>	Lindfield	1832
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A Gentleman of St. Christopher	<u>An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in British Sugar Colonies</u>	Basseterre St. Christopher	1784
A Merchant	<u>An Attempt to Strip Negro Emancipation of its Difficulties</u>	London	1824

A Planter	<u>West India Trade and Islands. Commercial Reasons for Non- Abolition of Slave Trade</u>	London	1789
Bridges, Rev. George W.	<u>A Voice from Jamaica in Reply to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.</u>	London	1823
Buxton, Thomas Fowell	<u>The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy</u>	London	1840
Clarkson, Thomas	<u>Address Presented to the Sovereigns of Europe and their Representatives When They Met at Aix-La-Chappelle in 1818</u>	London	1824
Clarkson, Thomas	<u>Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade</u>	London	1788
Clarkson, Thomas	<u>Letters on the Slave Trade and State of Natives in Africa</u>		1791
Clarkson, Thomas	<u>Letters to the Clergy of the Various Denominations</u>	London	1841
Clarkson, Thomas	<u>The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament (History of Abolition)</u>	London	1808
Colonist	<u>Edinburgh Review on the West Indies with Observations on a Pamphlet of Stephen and Zachary Macaulay and Slave Registration Bill</u>	Glasgow	1816
Edwards, Bryan	<u>A Speech Delivered at a Free Conference Between the Honourable Council and Assembly of Jamaica on the Subject of Mr. Wilberforce's Propositions in the House of Commons concerning the Slave Trade</u>	Kingston, Jamaica	1789
Edwards, Bryan	<u>The History, Civil and Commer- cial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies</u>	London	1793

Franklyn, G.	<u>An Answer to Rev. Mr. Clarkson's London Essay</u>	London	1789
Froude, J. A.	<u>The English in the West Indies</u>	London	1888
Gisborne, Thomas	<u>Remarks on the Late Decision of the House of Commons Respecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade</u>	London	1792
Harris, Rev. R.	<u>Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade Showing its Conformity with the Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion Delineated in the Sacred Writings of the Word of God</u>	London	1788
Klingberg, Frank J.	<u>The Anti-Slavery Movement in England</u>	New Haven Conn.	1926
Macaulay, Zachary	<u>A Letter to His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester</u>	London	1815
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Mathieson, William L.	<u>British Slavery and Its Abolition</u>	London	1926
Newton, John	<u>Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade</u>	London	1788
Payne, Ernest A.	<u>Freedom in Jamaica</u>	London	1833
Ramsay, James	<u>An Address on Proposed Bill For Abolition of the Slave Trade</u>	London	1788
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Richardson, J.M.	<u>Anti-Slavery Emancipation, An Appeal to Mr. Wilberforce</u>	London	1824
Sharp, Granville	<u>An Essay on Slavery Proving from Scriptures its Inconsistency with Humanity and Religion</u>	West Jersey	1773
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Stephen, Sir George	<u>A Letter to Sir Thomas F. Buxton on the Proposed Revival of the English Slave Trade</u>	London	1849
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Stephen, James	<u>A Defence of the Bill for the Registration of Slaves</u>	London	1816
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Stephen, James	<u>Speech at Annual Meeting of the African Institution</u>	London	1817

Stephen, James	<u>The Slavery of the British West Indies Colonies Delineated, as it Exists Both In Law and Practice and Compared with Slavery of Other Countries, Ancient and Modern (Slavery Delineated)</u>	London	1824
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Simon, Kathleen	<u>Slavery</u>	London	1930 (People's Lib- rary Edition)
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Wilberforce, William	<u>A Letter to the Prince of Talleyrand Perigod on the Subject of Slave Trade</u>	London	1814
Wilberforce, William	<u>Address for Preventing the Extension of Slavery at Cape of Good Hope</u>	London	1822
Wilberforce, William	<u>Address to Empress of Russia</u>		1823
Wilberforce, William	<u>An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire on Behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies and Jamaica</u>	London	1823
Wilberforce, William	<u>On Slavery</u>	Yorkshire	1807
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Williamson, Capt. Thomas	<u>The East India Vade-Mecum</u>	London	1810
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Gisborne, Thomas	<u>On the Situation of the Mining Poor. In Georgical Essays edited by A. Hunter.</u>	York	1803
Halcomb, John	<u>A Practical Measure of Relief from the Present System of the Poor Laws</u>		1826
Hamilton, Robert	<u>Address to the Inhabitants of Aberdeen on the Management of the Poor</u>		1822
Hanway, Jonas	<u>A Comprehensive View of Sunday Schools</u>	London	1786
Hill, Rowland	<u>Village Dialogue between Farmer Littleworth and Thomas Newman, Rev. Messers Lovegood and Dolittle</u>	London	1806
James, Sir Walter	<u>The Poor of London. A Letter to the Lord Bishop</u>	London	1844
Lefroy, Christopher	<u>Letter to Sir Thomas Baring, on Subject of Allotments of Land to the Poor</u>	London	1834
Leslie, John	<u>Remarks of the Present State of the Poor Law Question</u>	London	1834
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Sharp, Granville	<u>A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Admitting the Least Claim of Private Property in the Person of Men in England</u>	London	1769

Sharp, Granville	<u>Address to People of England Against the Suspension of Law, and also Stating the Illegality of Impresssing Seamen</u>		1778
Sharp, Granville	<u>Letter to a Committee of the Corporation of London Appointed to Enquire into the State of the London Workhouse - 1791</u>		1791
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Spence, Thomas	<u>Report of the Society for the Bettering the Condition of the Poor</u>	London	1802
Spence, Thomas	<u>The Right of Infants</u>	London	1797
Thornton, Henry	<u>Inquiry Into the Nature and Effect of Paper Credit of Great Britain</u>	London	1802
Urquhart, Thomas	<u>A Letter to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P. on the Subject of Impressment</u>	London	1816
Venn, John	<u>Agrarian Justice</u>	London	1798
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Wilberforce, William	<u>A Letter to the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of Yorkshire</u>	London	1807

Wilberforce, William	<u>Advice Suggested by the State of the Times</u>	London	1803
	<u>An Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts</u>	London	1777
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	<u>Of the Education of the Poor, Being at the First Part of a Digest of the Report of the Society, For Better- ing the Condition of Poor</u>		1809
	<u>Plan of a Society Established in London A.D. 1785 for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools</u>	London	1788
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	<u>Report of Committee of the Society for Carrying into Effect His Majesty's Proclamation Against Vice and Immorality for the Year 1799</u>	London	1800
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<u>Report of the Society for the Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor, Patron the King.</u>	London	1797
<u>Report of the Select Committee on Artisans and Machinery</u>		1824
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More, Hannah	<u>Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society</u>		1788
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